

ROADSIDE ARCHITECTURE OF KENTUCKY'S DIXIE HIGHWAYS

A TOUR DOWN ROUTES 31E AND 31W



Field Session for Restore America: Communities At A Crossroads
The 2004 National Trust for Historic Preservation Conference
1 October, 2004
7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Sponsored by the Kentucky Heritage Council, the State Historic Preservation Office. The KHC is an agency of the Kentucky Commerce Cabinet

The mission of the Kentucky Heritage Council is to partner with Kentuckians to strengthen preservation networks, so that our historic places are valued, protected, and used to enhance the quality and economy of our communities.

ROADSIDE ARCHITECTURE OF KENTUCKY'S DIXIE HIGHWAYS

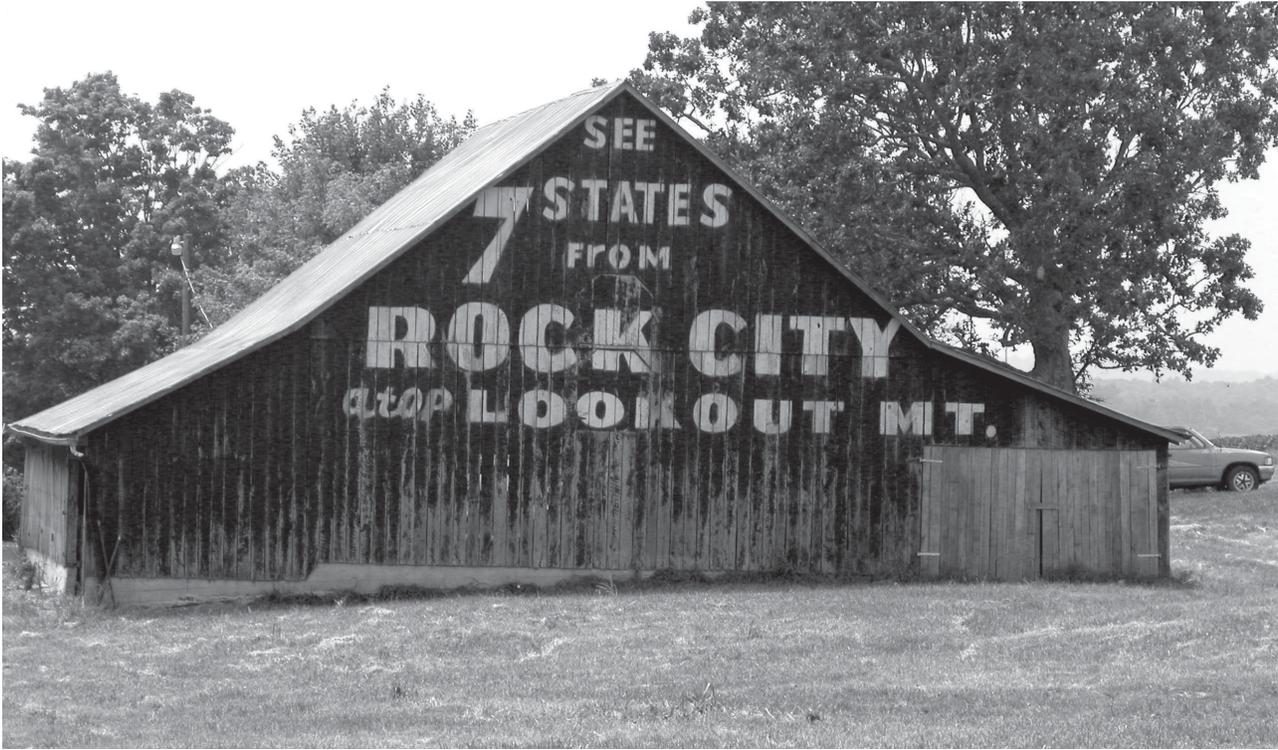


Photo: Sandra Wilson

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This booklet was written, designed, and edited by Rachel M. Kennedy and William J. Macintire. All photography by the Heritage Council, unless otherwise noted.

With contributions from: Richard Jett, Joe and Maria Campbell Brent, Tom Chaney, Sandra Wilson, and Dixie Hibbs

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Introduction

The romance of the Old South has left a vivid trail along what is now U.S. Highway 31-E through Kentucky. This 200-mile link in the popular Lakes-to-Gulf, U.S. 31, extends some eight miles above Louisville southward through Kentucky to Nashville. Taking the traveler through a veritable beehive of tourist lore, it unfolds before him attractions which have made Kentucky famous. Here scattered along this highway, are shrines of history, unsurpassed scenic beauty, varied recreational facilities and typical Kentucky industries. Added to these is the atmosphere and the inspiration that is "Kentucky. (In Kentucky Spring 1940, 32)

US 31 holds little lure—on the map. But with a full gasoline tank and at the wheel of a tuned-up car with everything in order this becomes another adventure—and the highway, the road to Dixie. Out of your Cage, Out of your Cage, And Take your Soul On a Pilgrimage! (Kentucky Progress Magazine June 1929, 45)

Kentucky has a rich and diverse history. From pioneer settlement houses to burial mounds created by Native Americans thousands of years ago, Kentuckians have access to a wealth of historic places. But, Kentucky's history did not end 100 years ago. The historic resources associated with tourism and the early automobile age have become historic in their own right. This tour down the western arm of the historic Dixie Highway corridors will highlight this important roadside heritage. Identification of building types, like motels, service stations, and tourist sites and skills such as reading the landscape through use of the built environment will be emphasized. Also, the history of roads and roadside culture will be addressed through the best primary documents we have: the resources themselves.

This booklet is intended for use by participants in the *Roadside Architecture of the Dixie Highways* tour during the 2004 National Trust for Historic Preservation conference in Louisville. However, it is hoped that it can be used by modern-day auto tourists in their quest for an authentic early 20th century adventure down the nearly forgotten Dixie Highways. The trip can be made within a day. A detailed driving guide with mileage and directions is included at the end of this booklet to assist with recreating the tour.

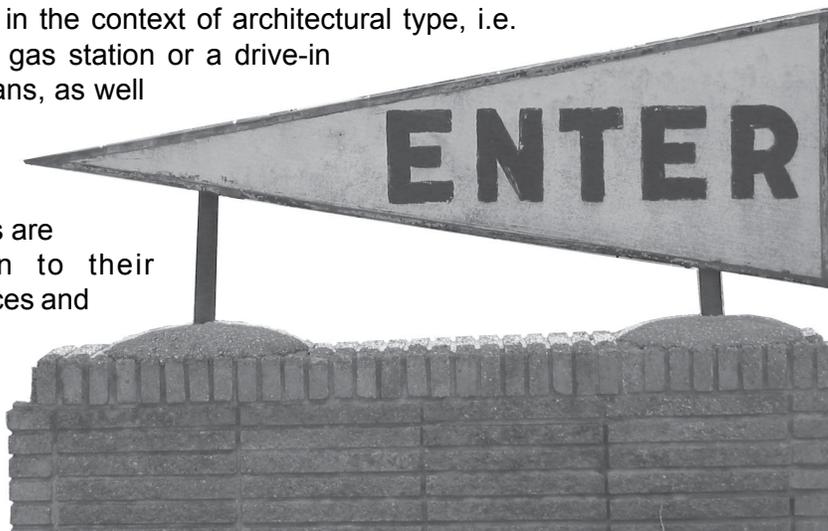
This tour book is organized with an introduction that explains the history of the Dixie Highways and early automobile touring. The remainder of the booklet is arranged by county, as driven, with brief county histories and a selection of resources encountered on the trip.

Resources are dealt with in the context of architectural type, i.e.

whether the building is a gas station or a drive-in theater and what that means, as well

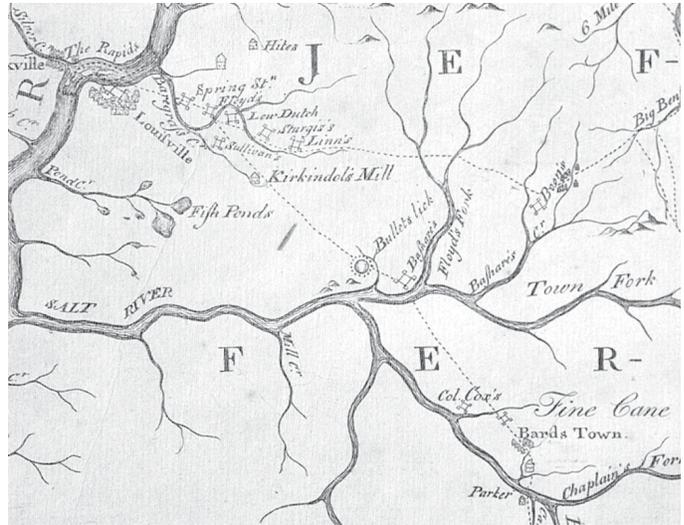
as within their importance in local and regional history.

Additionally, the resources are analyzed with relation to their importance as historic places and commercial history along the Dixie Highways. The booklet concludes with some strategies for preservation of these important reminders of our motoring past.



Early Roads in Kentucky

Kentucky's early road system consisted of well-worn buffalo traces, used by animals and Native Americans alike. As a general rule, these paths were dirt covered, maintained only through use, and impassable in inclement weather. Upon the establishment of the United States government in the late 18th century, post roads were designated to provide mail delivery under federal license, though no monies were set aside for development. While post roads had been authorized by the Constitution, turnpikes were authorized on the state level to assist farmers in getting their goods to the market and for travelers to reach their destination in better time. The name turnpike comes from the process of travel: the traveler would pay at a toll house or toll gate and a large "pike" or pole that denied further access would be "turned" or lifted and the traveler could proceed on their way. Upon the development of the turnpike road system in the early 19th century, the state's roads began to improve.



John Filson's 1784 map of Kentucky, detail showing the route from Louisville to Bardstown (Kentucky Historical Society)

Turnpike corporations were basically private companies that operated with state charter to develop roads between major urban trading centers. No public money was initially involved. Turnpike developers recouped the costs of building and maintaining the roads through tolls charged. Typically, turnpikes would have toll houses located every few miles to take in money. Sometimes different companies would hold charter to one main road. This process allowed capital to be spread out among investors. In these instances, charters were very specific as to improvements on the roads, so that continuity would be maintained.

Improvements generally included hard surfacing, construction of drainage ditches, and construction of bridges. Macadamizing was one of the methods for improving roads. In fact, the system, named after its founder John Loudon McAdam, became synonymous with "modern" road building practice. Essentially, the road was provided with a drained and compacted subsurface of crushed stones no heavier than six ounces. The stones were placed in layers above a foundation and compacted to form a hard surface. The cost of these roads was substantial. The expense could be between \$5,000 and \$7,500 a mile including bridges. (Brent, Brent and Allen 2003, 18).

Maintenance on all turnpike roads was expected to be accomplished on the local level by citizens, in lieu of taxes. Most 19th century Kentuckians thought that anyone could build and maintain a passable road; the development of the road professions and scientific road building was years away.

Eventually, it became clear that private capital was not sufficient to meet the demand for decent roads. The cost of construction was much more than anticipated and the availability of investment capital was scarce. Tolls could not be charged that would compensate for the higher construction costs, and the time and labor necessary for maintenance did not exist among the public. In sum, privatized roads could not meet the demands of the free market. Because the state legislature understood that good roads were a public matter, assistance

became available. In 1830, the first ever state appropriation was made for a macadamized road. (Brent, Brent, and Allen 2003, 18). Other appropriations followed and by the 1850s all major thoroughfares had received state assistance. In most cases, these roads were built with public capital leveraging private funds. Among the roads built in this time period were the Maysville to Lexington Turnpike (64 miles), the Louisville and Nashville Turnpike via Bardstown and Glasgow (144 miles), and the Louisville to Nashville Turnpike via Elizabethtown and Bowling Green (145 miles). (Brent, Brent, and Allen 2003, 18).

The L&N Turnpikes and the Railroad

The Upper Louisville Turnpike, now known as US Route 31E, was chartered in 1831. Originally, the road terminated at Bardstown, but it became necessary to extend the turnpike to the Tennessee line, where it would meet up with a state road that led to Nashville. The turnpike was macadamized. Construction of the Upper Turnpike concluded in 1850 at a total cost of \$970,000, three times what it had been projected to cost.

The Lower Louisville Turnpike, now US Route 31W, took equally long to build. The pike was conceived in 1826 by an Act of the Kentucky legislature; though by the time the company's charter expired the road had not been constructed. In 1833, the legislature incorporated another turnpike company to accomplish the job. The pike was split into 5 companies: (1) Louisville to the mouth of the Salt River at West Point (2) West Point to Elizabethtown (3) Elizabethtown to Bell's Tavern (4) Bell's Tavern to Bowling Green (5) Bowling Green to the state line for a total of 143 miles. Toll gates were built every five miles and the road was macadamized. The turnpike was completed in 1850. The Lower L&N turnpike was used as a post road.

Travel on the turnpike roads, in spite of modern road building methods, was difficult. Stage coaches were cold in the winter and hot in the summer. Additionally, roads tended to be bumpy, and without shock absorbers the traveler faced a bone-jarring ride. The time consumed, though much improved, was still significant. For example, a traveler taking a stage coach on the Lower or Upper Turnpike could expect to endure two full days of travel with stops only for meals, horse changes, tolls, and sleep. An express coach could traverse the route in one and a half days with stops only for meals, tolls, and several changes of horses. In sum, the system was ripe for improvements.

Improvements came in the form of the iron horse—the railroad. Railroad lines, ironically, began to be developed in the area shortly after the completion of the turnpike routes. In 1859, the Railroad was extended from Louisville to Nashville, on line with the Lower Louisville Turnpike. With the advent of rail transport, the turnpikes were essentially abandoned. The new transportation option was much quicker, more comfortable, and easy to access. In fact, it took only 10 hours to get to Nashville from Louisville on the route. New towns sprung up around the line and old towns along the lines benefited from the influx of commerce. The railroad era was the age of centralized commerce and living arrangements; the vestiges of which can be seen on old commercial Main Streets across the state. Buildings were spaced closely together along the railroad tracks to allow for quicker transit time. The center of the focus was the railroad depot or stop. We will see an example of a railroad town when we get to Horse Cave, located off the old L&N railroad and 31W.

Thriving stage coach era towns, bypassed by the railroad, withered in the last quarter of the 19th century. But towns were not the only casualty of the railroad, the turnpike system was essentially abandoned. The lack of investment into the roads meant that very little maintenance

and few new roads were built from the 1850s to 1900, when the railroad began to decline in importance. Upon the coming of the age of automobility, roads were in terrible disrepair.

Automobiles and the Good Roads Movement

Hardly any mode of transportation has been allowed to alter the landscape as dramatically as the automobile. No longer was commerce tied to urban areas by fixed train and streetcar lines; by the 1920s, the popularity of the automobile and state/federal policies fostered the construction of new, evenly paved roads. A road building frenzy resulted, which made possible commercial development at any convenient location along Kentucky's thoroughfares.

Henry Ford is typically credited with creation of the automobile and assembly line production. Ford is not responsible for either invention. Rather, he brought these existing inventions together and added standardized parts to create a machine made, mass-produced affordable personal automobile. The result was the mass availability of cars to many Americans. Before Ford pioneered these techniques, automobiles were made by skilled crafts persons and were extremely expensive. The Model T was the first affordable car for the middle classes. It was produced in Ford's Louisville Kentucky plant when it was established in 1913.

Cars were quickly adopted by the American public. Across the nation, car ownership rose exponentially. In Kentucky, motor vehicle ownership rose from 20,000 in 1915 to 127,000 in 1921 to 1 million in 1958. (Harrison and Klotter 1997, 314). To accommodate the new machines, good evenly paved roads were needed. And, they were definitely lacking. But, the situation was no different across the United States. Most roads had been undermaintained during the age of the railroad. They simply were not needed. But, with the new automobile, the desire for better access, and the inauguration of the federal Rural Free Delivery (RFD) mail service in 1892, roads became a priority for state and federal governments.



Unidentified muddy road, Works Progress Administration, Goodman-Paxton Collection, University of Kentucky Libraries

Automobile users in the early 20th century had to prepare for the worst possible conditions. Early accounts relay need for everything from tire patches to emergency food provisions to extra clothing to firearms. In many cases, automobiles had to be pulled out of road muck by teams of horses or mules. Kentucky, for its part, had the distinction of being a fascinating place to visit and, on the other hand, the “detour state.” As a contemporary observer put it, “Kentucky was once the greatest mule producing state in the Union. When automobiles arrived, instead of being relegated the mule became more popular—in Kentucky. There was not a through highway in the State, but by a combination of muddy gaps and plenty of ‘mule power’ the motorist could get across the State—and how!” (*Kentucky Progress Magazine* March 1932, 21). Automobile advocates knew that something must change.

The National Good Roads movement was started to promote evenly paved, scientific roads. The movement was an alliance between automobile advocates; progressives and women's rights advocates who believed that roads were essential to education reform; and bicyclists who could not navigate scenic country roads. Automobile Associations played a pivotal role in the promotion of better roads. The American Automobile Association (AAA) made great efforts to publicize roads for recreational purposes. The AAA sponsored auto tours across America to show both the need for good roads and the potential for heightened tourist trade.



—Caufield & Shook.
Larue county. Scene on road between New Haven and Howards-
town, Kentucky.

A good road, from Kentucky Progress Magazine

In sum, all of these advocates applied pressure to state and federal leaders to do something to ameliorate bad conditions. These interests were strange bedfellows in a way. The auto organizations and the industry were interested in interstate all-weather roads, and the progressives were interested in professionalizing road-building as well as providing rural areas with efficient services. They did not often see eye-to-eye, given that the auto organizations did not care about farm-to-market roads and the progressives saw the auto boosters as only interested in enhancing their pocket books. Nonetheless, help was not forthcoming until the 1916 Federal Aid Road Act, which provided limited funds for road construction with state match. Competition for these monies was intense.

Conceived by the newly formed American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO), the 1916 Road Act authorized \$75 million in federal matching funds for states to construct an efficient road system. The apportionment was based upon several factors including population, land area, and mileage of Rural Free Delivery routes and star routes, the latter of which were privately run mail delivery routes. Federally assisted roads were to be free of tolls and had to be maintained by the states. All states were required to establish a state highway department that would work with the Office of Public Roads. (Weingroff n.d., "Federal Aid Road Act of 1916...", 1-5).

In Kentucky, a state highway department had already been created in 1912. (Harrison and Klotter 1997, 315). By 1914, a plan had been formulated to connect county seats across the Commonwealth. Gasoline taxes, licensing fees, and federal aid were utilized to begin Kentucky's ambitious road building project. In 1930, the state had 4400 miles of state-maintained roads. As *Kentucky Progress* magazine points out in April 1929, "Ohio has a primary system of approximately 4,000 miles; Kentucky has approximately 12,000 miles. Ohio started before Kentucky but when Kentucky did start she rapidly knocked the undeserved stigma 'The Detour State...'" (*Kentucky Progress Magazine* April 1929, 12).

Auto Tourism

Many Southern roads were in especially deplorable conditions, due to a lack of proper taxing authority and economic hardship. In spite of this, southerners understood that with roads came automobile access and with this came auto tourism. Though the concern in the South for good roads was initially for farm to market roads, this focus changed to promotion of interstate highways when the potential for tourism dollars was understood. As historian Martha Carver puts it, "Local leaders considered these interstate highways a boon to local development mostly due to the anticipated increase in tourism and actively sought to have their county selected to be on the new interstate routes." (Carver 1998, A-6).

Transcontinental auto-touring had become by the mid-1910s an extremely popular pastime of the upper and the middle classes. Automobile clubs, like the Automobile Association of America, sponsored trips from point to point to show that it could be done. For example, a mass motor tour was organized from major eastern cities to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis in 1904 by the AAA. Auto touring was formally organized by clubs and middle class tourists planned auto vacations using information gathered.

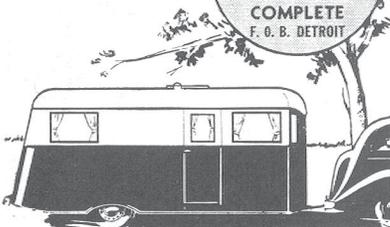
Intrepid travelers had to endure not only poor road conditions, but also a lack of navigational aids to assist them in their travels. There were few road maps and even fewer signs prior to 1920 that would assist with finding a location. To assist with this, the AAA published *The 1910 Blue Book*, which was the first guide that linked northern cities with the southern states. The guide was the result of two years of field research by R.H. "Pathfinder" Johnson. Johnson traveled all across the south in search of routes and local information. "His task was monumental. As a starting point Johnson relied on information gleaned from Civil War records. Few roads were marked in any way whatsoever. When a fork was reached there was no indication which way to go to reach a particular destination. When questioned, local residents were often hazy on just how to reach a distant location. In blazing the trail between Nashville and Chattanooga, Johnson asked at least 200 people along the way, often having to discard instructions at the next town and start over." (Brent, Brent, and Allen 2003, 22).

In spite of poor travel conditions, travelers continued to make trips to the South, desiring access to Civil War Battlefield sites, historic places, and to sunny Florida. To assist with this, private businessmen began to organize highway associations, intended to develop and promote highways from one destination to another. Regional Highway Associations, like the 1913 National Roosevelt Midland Trail (now Route 60 in Kentucky), the 1913 Lincoln Highway Association from New York to San Francisco, and the Old Spanish Trail from St. Augustine Florida to San Diego, became increasingly influential. By the 1920s, trail associations had named over 200 routes. (Weingroff n.d., "From Names to Numbers..." 1). The trail

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Advertisement from *Esquire Magazine*, June, 1936

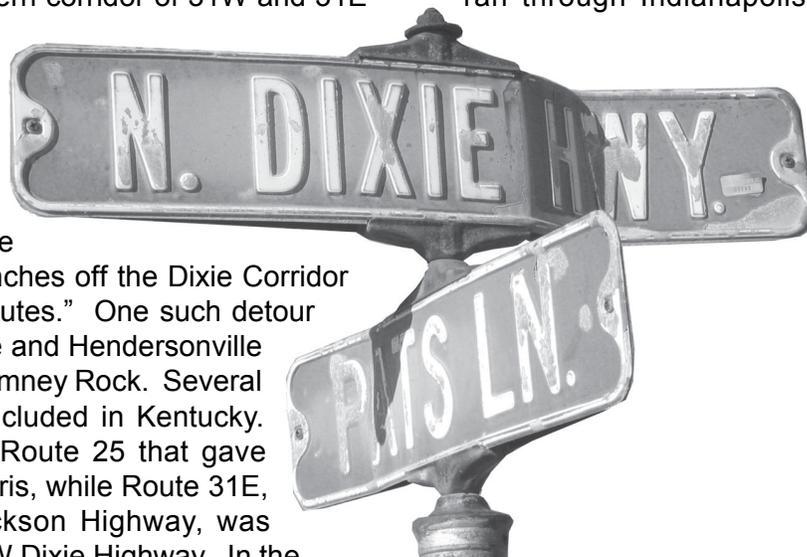
associations saw as their responsibility mapping the routes, getting states or localities to pave their road, and promoting the attractions located on the route.

The Dixie Highways

The best motor routes to the South lead through Kentucky. The old commonwealth has built five major north-south routes with connections to include eight important Ohio River gateways. (Kentucky Progress Magazine November 1928,11)

The Dixie Highway was the brainchild of Carl Fisher, promoter of the Lincoln Highway Association, founder of Prest-O-Lite battery powered car headlights, and developer of Miami Beach as a tourist destination. Fisher understood that a mid-western route to Florida would be essential for development of his resort at Miami Beach. Other founders, like William Gilbreath of Indiana, were good roads enthusiasts. The Association was established in 1915 in order to build and promote a mid-western route from Michigan to Florida. The organization was headquartered in Chattanooga Tennessee and was directly linked with the Chattanooga Automobile Club. The initial directors of the association were from the states to be directly involved: Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, Ohio, and Michigan. The group began its efforts with a monthly magazine to promote the road, called appropriately *The Dixie Highway*.

Early on, the Association became embroiled in contention about the route of the actual highway. At an apparently raucous meeting, delegations from states along the route sparred for more mileage and detours to places of special interest. According to historian Howard Preston, "So eager were southerners to have their town or county on the Dixie Highway map that, when a delegate rose from his seat at the Chattanooga meeting to proclaim the merits of his community, representatives from rival communities hurled insults and taunting criticisms at him." (Carver 1998, A-12). The May 1915 meeting became known as the "Second Battle of Chattanooga," and it set precedent for the Association's policy. In sum, the Highway became not one direct route, but diffuse dual routes that meandered through a great many locales before ending in Canada or Florida. The Directors agreed to have two north-south routes totaling over 4,000 miles, beginning at Sainte Saulte Marie in extreme northern Michigan and ending at Miami Beach. The eastern Dixie Highway, now Routes 25 and 27 through Kentucky, was routed through Detroit, Dayton, Cincinnati, Lexington, Knoxville, Chattanooga, Atlanta, Savannah, and Jacksonville. The western corridor of 31W and 31E ran through Indianapolis, Louisville, Nashville, Chattanooga, Atlanta, and Tallahassee. (Carver 1998, A-13). The two routes merged in Chattanooga and in the Atlanta area. In addition to the twin routes, the Association allowed for branches off the Dixie Corridor to be included as "detour routes." One such detour route was between Asheville and Hendersonville N.C. that gave access to Chimney Rock. Several other detour routes were included in Kentucky. U.S. 27 was a spur off of Route 25 that gave access to Cynthiana and Paris, while Route 31E, formally known as the Jackson Highway, was considered a spur of the 31W Dixie Highway. In the



end, these additional sections made the total highway length 5,700 miles. The routes passed through 200 counties in eleven states. (Carver 1998, A-15). According to historian Drake Hokanson, "The Dixie placed little value on directness, and with multiple routes it was diffuse, dilute, and subject to all manner of political pressures." (Carver 1998, A-15). Most of the route passed through dues-paying county seats and by important tourist attractions.

In terms of road improvement, the Highway Association had to rely upon state and local officials to complete the actual road. There was a Committee on Road Specifications that had authority to revoke the sought-after Dixie moniker if roads were not kept up to Association standards. It is unclear, however, that any portion of the diffuse route was ever denied the Dixie name. Among the specifications for the Dixie Highway corridor was the provision that the route must be free of tolls, except for the bridges crossing the Ohio River. The latter were considered to be massive undertakings. The type of paving preferred was concrete, but macadamized, dirt, or brick roads existed along the routes. In addition to this, roadbuilders had to climb steep ascents through use of switchbacks. As Carver states, "These sharp hairpin curves became part of the driving experience, known as COD ("Coming Over Darling") curves, and people joked about "meeting yourself coming back." (Carver 1998, A-56).

The 1916 and 1921 Road Acts assisted the Highway Association immensely through funding many portions of the interstate road. The Act prohibited tolls along federally funded roads, which greatly assisted the Association's cause, and specified hard-surfaced roads. Unfortunately for roads' advocates, the Acts only provided 50 percent match; and even 50 percent was a large sum for state and local governments. The Association had to hustle to help localities raise both private and public funds to complete the routes. Another strategy the Association used to get routes paved was to connect the importance of good roads to national security. In Kentucky, for instance, no money was designated to the Highways in 1917 until the Association lobbied for more funds based upon the wartime threat. The Dixie Highway routes were considered passable by 1921, but a hard-surfaced highway did not exist until 1929. (Carver 1998, A-54). The alternate routes, like 31E, were not considered passable until later in the 1930s.

Publicizing the Highway was considered essential. As a result, much effort was spent to acquaint travelers with the route and with the attractions therein. The Dixie Highway Association published detailed local and national maps to assist the motoring traveler with main routes



and detours. The Association also branded the Highway through use of a standardized logo. The Dixie Highway logo was a white D.H. located in a red band. The highways were marked with this logo as follows: a “white band six inches wide at the top and bottom, with the letters “D.H.” in white in a red band of the same width in the middle.” (Carver 1998, A-58). The bands were to be placed on “at least three telegraph or telephone poles on each side of all road or street intersections or turns, at a height of eight feet from the ground.” (Carver 1998, A-59). Much like the efforts of the AAA, the Dixie Highway Association used motor tours as a means to promote the efficacy of the routes. In 1925, for instance, a jubilee motorcade was organized to drive the entire route from Michigan to Florida, while celebrating achievements along the way. The motorcade received coverage in the *New York Times*.

Economic development was the main goal of the Dixie Highway’s promotional endeavors. Services would be needed along the heavily-traveled route and local business persons could expect to prosper with a well-placed motel, gas station, or tourist site. The Dixie Highway magazine provided tourists with information about these sites in their monthly issues.

The Dixie Highways in Kentucky

Kentucky has been on the path to Florida for the past three years or more, the ‘early birds’ starting out in November, the “big parade” going in January and the tailenders hurrying through in March. Before the rear guard has vanished, the home-coming begins and the roads are full again in May. By that time all roads are carrying thousands of spring and summer tourists. (Kentucky Progress Magazine November 1929, 11).

The western Dixie Highways in Kentucky reflect the confusion and the politics among Dixie advocates of official routing across the state. The leg of the highway known as the official route to Dixie was the old Lower Louisville Turnpike Road, now known as 31W. The Upper Louisville Turnpike route, though also considered a part of the Dixie Highway, was called the Jackson Highway or the Lincoln-Jackson Highway.

The Jackson Highway Association was founded in 1911 by an Alabama woman named Miss Alma Rittenberry, a suffragette and member of the United Daughter’s of the Confederacy. (Weingroff n.d., “From Names to Numbers...,” 2). It is the only highway association that was established by a woman. Rittenberry’s route from Chicago to New Orleans was intended to memorialize Andrew Jackson, our seventh president. The route linked up with the current-day 31E in Louisville ran through Lincoln country and continued to Jackson’s home in Nashville. Because of the strong association along the corridor with Lincoln, the route became known as the Lincoln-Jackson Highway. It was also referred to as the Dixie Highway, because towns along the route desired both appellations. The two routes met up just north of Nashville.

The official Dixie Highway was finished with hard surfacing in 1930. Though slow to complete, the highway benefited from federal funding. Highway advocates were able to persuade state leaders that the route was essential to national defense during WWI because of numerous military camps that it served. Federal funds were forthcoming to assist in wartime security, further adding to paved mileage on the route. The Jackson Highway was paved from Louisville to Nashville by 1931. The last parts to be finished were 12 miles between New Haven and Hodgenville and a section in Allen County. (Brent, Brent, and Allen 2003, 24). A celebration was held at Abraham Lincoln’s Birthplace National Park near Hodgenville upon completion in 1931. Eight thousand persons were in attendance.

Both of these highways were often publicized by Kentucky Progress Magazine, the “Official Publication of the Kentucky Progress Commission Created by the 1928 Legislature to Advertise Kentucky to the World.” (Kentucky Progress Magazine April 1929, 7). Nearly every issue of the magazine was filled with information about touring the state across one of its important highways and sites to be encountered along the way. Each issue contained a map of the state with the condition of roads updated quarterly. For example, the 1931 Summer issue include a condition assessment of 31E and 31W. U.S. 31W is noted to be completely paved. 31E, the Jackson Highway, has a detour from Bear Wallow to Horse Cave to 31W, because of on-going construction projects.

The Numbered Highway System and the End of Dixie

The harmless tourist in his flivver doesn't know whether he is going or coming, whether he is a hundred miles from nowhere or on the right road to a good chicken dinner and a night's lodging. Travel Writer William Ullman (Weingroff n.d., “From Names to Numbers...,” 18).

The Dixie Highways were a victim of their own success. The numerous and competing highway associations created confusion among the traveling public. Motorists felt that they were at the mercy of the highway associations, which many assumed were rife with political and economic corruption. Additionally, many of the routes, like the ones in Kentucky, merged and converged and it was difficult to know what route to follow. Trail boosters assured motorists that theirs was the fastest and the best, in spite of the fact that dues-paying cities were included regardless of the addition to trip mileage. Progressives in the federal government strongly disliked the highway associations, mainly because they felt like the routes were not assisting anyone but the pocket books of the association's founders. Federal road advocates believed that reform was necessary.



In 1925, the Secretary of Agriculture appointed a Joint Board of Interstate Highways to look into the problems. The Board was convened because, “the general public in traveling over the highways through several States encounters considerable confusion because of the great variety of direction signs and danger signs.” (Weingroff n.d., “From Names to Numbers...,” 4). The Board considered many issues including proper designation of interstate routes, uniformity of signage and marking of federally funded roads, and standard highway design. Out of these meetings and regional meetings held later, the Board decided that a federal numbering system was necessary to quell confusion and that standardized highway markers would provide this information to the public. The numbering system basically worked like this: east-west routes were given even numbers and north-south roads were assigned odd numbers. For principal north-south routes, two digit numbers were assigned ending in one or five. For important east-west routes, two-digit numbers ended in zero. Three digit numbers were given to crossovers, cutoffs, and short sections. Alternate routes were given the number of the principal route plus 100.

The long-drawn out process of designating numbers to named routes became quickly heated. Highway Associations were greatly aggravated that federal road planners did not always give their roads a single number. Many named roads were split into several numbers, due to the need for a quick and efficient interstate system. But, Associations were sure that the federal government would allow them to preserve the named routes by posting the name on privately funded highway signs. Additionally, states were also annoyed when favored routes lost status through numerical designation as a less-important route. Competition for routes that ended

in a zero or a one was intense. The governor of Kentucky actually traveled to Washington to dispute the number for the National Roosevelt Midland Trace. The road had initially received the number 62, but upon heavy lobbying, the route was changed to Route 60. Other contemporary writers hinted that the standardized numbering was the work of bureaucrats out-of-control, intending to stamp out any romance or history of the nation's roads. In the end, the federal highway planners were successful. The numbers assigned in 1926 remain on our highway maps today.

The Highway Associations did not fare as well. Upon adoption of the numbered highway system by AASHO, private signs were not permitted along the numerical routes. Trail Associations slowly disbanded, their work of highway promotions had ended. The western arm of the Dixie Highway was numbered 31W, while the Dixie Jackson Highway became known as 31E.

The Dixie Highway Association concluded its work in 1927, when it was taken over by the Chattanooga Automobile Association. The Jackson Highway Association had a longer history in Kentucky, reorganizing and placing pamphlets at gas stations and restaurants along 31E into the 1940s.

Works Projects Administration and Road Building

Any discussion of road building would not be complete without a brief mention of the work of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Works Projects Administration in the 1930s. The federal government embarked on a major and ambitious road improvements project through the Depression era Works Projects Administration. The WPA, as it was known, was created by FDR in 1935 and was essentially an agency charged to provide work relief to unemployed workers on important local projects. Roosevelt strongly believed that relief should be based upon work, not on need alone. The WPA offered labor-intensive jobs to boost the economy and provide improvements in local infrastructure. Some examples of WPA projects include: road and bridge building, construction of schools, construction of drainage ditches and sewers, construction of buildings in state parks, and construction of water treatment plants.

Road building and improvements were considered a major task of the WPA. The AASHO in 1933, in fact, stated that road building should be a priority. "In determining questions of public policy—the place of road building as an agency of employment during the depression—we must not lose sight of the central fact that it is imperative for the future of our American civilization to replace the dole with work, and that of all the means of providing work...road building is from almost every standpoint the most satisfactory." (Mertz n.d., 19). Apparently, the federal government listened because from 1935 until the agency's dissolution in 1941, highway, road, and street projects accounted for



Men working on a new roadway, Works Progress Administration, Goodman-Paxton Collection, University of Kentucky Libraries

\$4,418 million or 38.9 percent of total expenditures of the construction and engineering projects. (Howard 1943, 130). Another \$758 million went into sewer improvements that directly impacted street and road projects. (Howard 1943, 130).

In Kentucky, road building was the highest expenditure as well. According to historian George Blakey, “heavy construction projects consumed a great deal of WPA money in Kentucky, making the state typical of national endeavors. The WPA undertook work on more than fourteen thousand miles of roads; seventy-three thousand bridges, culverts, and viaducts...” (Blakey 1986, 59).

We will see vestiges of the WPA’s work projects along 31E and W today. Many of the bridges were constructed by the WPA, and the Salt River Valley Overlook in Spencer County may have its origins in a work project. The roadbeds of both roads were improved in certain counties during the era. More research needs to be done to accurately assess the impact of the WPA on particular roads and bridge construction in the state.

The Death of the old Interstate Highway System

In 1944, Congress authorized, but did not fund, a Federal Aid Highway Act which included Section 7: a provision for a national system of interstate transcontinental highways. The idea had been in the works since the 1930s “superhighway” movement and was perhaps most famously displayed by Norman Bel Geddes at the 1939 Futurama Exhibit at the New York World’s Fair. President Roosevelt was among the admirers of the idea. The movement, like The Act, was intended to develop new, faster road systems that would increase access, decrease time delays on the older roads, and provide for national defense. Priority was given to four or six lane, arrow straight, limited access freeways.

The construction of interstate highways would have to wait, though, until the end of the hostilities in Japan and Europe. By the early 1950s, Americans were ready to tackle the issue of interstate highways anew. President Dwight Eisenhower strongly favored development of interstates, due to his wartime experiences on the Autobahn in Germany. In 1954, Congress passed another Federal Aid Highway Act; this time funding was included with 60 percent paid by the federal government and 40 percent paid by the state. Eisenhower found the appropriation unsatisfactory and lobbied extensively to increase it. According to the President, “the five penalties of the nation’s obsolete highway network: the annual death and injury toll, the waste of billions of dollars in detours and traffic jams, the clogging of the nation’s courts with highway-related suits, the inefficiency in the transportation of goods, and the ‘appalling inadequacies to meet the demands of catastrophe or defense, should an atomic war come.’” (Weingroff n.d., “Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956...,” 6). Although contemporary observers may note that these issues exist and even thrive in today’s interstate system, the progressivism of the day insisted that all of these difficulties were surmountable through development of the interstate system. By the late 1950s, and the enactment of the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, the interstate system had been sufficiently funded and became the system we see today.

As you might imagine, the construction of limited access superhighways removed traffic from federal routes like the 31E and 31W, as it was intended to do. The effects of this, though, were not sufficiently understood. While senators could argue about gas taxes and the possibility of free vs. pay-as-you go highways, no one debated the merits of abandoning the older highways and increasing automobile capacity. Nowhere in the US Congress was there concern for the small business owner of the localities through which the roads ran, except to remove traffic from them. The Interstate system and the car were nearly universally lauded as necessary.

In the case of the 31E and W, Interstate 65 worked as planned. The limited access freeway, constructed in 1965, led to a reduction in auto traffic along 31E and 31W and, in turn, a reduction in business revenues to locally owned tourist services and to small towns along the routes. The new freeway interchanges, where access was allowed onto and off of the road, were the new hot spots for business. Because the points of ingress and egress were limited, land values were high and local business owners could not afford to locate there. As a result of all these factors, the era of local businesses catering to tourists along a uniformly accessible route was over and with this went local character and unique architectural flights of fancy. In its place, large corporations developed relatively standardized designs to increase operating cost efficiencies.

The terms Dixie Highway or Jackson Highway have nearly been forgotten, even by locals who drive them everyday. Yet, the history lives on in the historic resources, like the old gas stations, restaurants, and tourist sites that still dot the route. This guide will attempt to acquaint the modern traveler with resources associated with early automobile travel on a trip down two of Kentucky's important historic highways.

Trip Begins

US 31E, the Jackson Highway, winds over the central part of the State, which is rolling or hilly for the most part. Towns of any size are far apart, and except for some truck gardening near Louisville, the farms along the highway hold to the typical Kentucky pattern in that they chiefly produce corn and tobacco, or are given over to the raising of livestock. The winter scene is flat in tone except for the evergreens and the orange of sage grass; but in April and May, the woods are gay with bloom of redbuds and dogwood, and brilliant through the fall with the contrasting colors of the frosted leaves. (Works Projects Administration Federal Writer's Project 1939, 289).

Jefferson County and Louisville

Brief history

Jefferson County is best known as the home of Kentucky's largest city, Louisville, and for its proximity to the Ohio River. "Along some fifty miles the Ohio forms the northern border of the county, separating Jefferson County and Kentucky from neighboring Indiana. Lying largely in Kentucky's Outer Bluegrass region, Jefferson County is rolling to hilly in the eastern part...while the central and western portions consist of a tableland that is noticeably broken only in areas adjacent to stream drainages. This gently rolling plain makes up the largest part of Jefferson County. In the southwest, a section of the Knobs lies adjacent to the Muldraugh escarpment (Highland Rim) and provides the highest elevations in the county." (Brent, Brent, and Allen 2003, 29) The county was formed in 1780, as one of the three original counties of Virginia's Kentucky Territory, which at that time was large enough to include the entire area that is part of this tour.

The City of Louisville was founded in 1778 by explorer George Rogers Clark and named in honor of French King Louis XVI. The City owes its existence to the Falls of the Ohio, a two-mile long series of rapids which forms the only natural impediment to navigation for the entire length of the Ohio River. Thus, Louisville became a stopover point, a vital conduit for travel, and a hub of commercial activity.

Radiating out from Louisville, like spokes in a wheel, a series of turnpikes developed. These toll roads frequently paralleled watercourses. Or, they followed buffalo traces between the Salt River in Bullitt County and the Falls of the Ohio. They linked the farms in the county with the markets in the city. Until the recent construction of the interstate highway system, these turnpikes served as the primary conduits through the community. (Keys, Morgan, and Neary 1992).

Currently, Louisville is home to the Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs and the Louisville Slugger baseball bat, now celebrated at the Louisville Slugger Museum. In 2003, Louisville and Jefferson County merged to form a common government, Louisville Metro, making the area the 16th largest city in the nation, with an area of over 365 square miles and a population of approximately 700,000.

The route we will be following after we turn off of Market Street is Bardstown road, which generally follows the route of the old Louisville-Bardstown Turnpike. The first roadway along this early buffalo trace was proposed in 1784 to run to Bardstown. In 1832, the Louisville Turnpike Company began construction of a macadamized roadway between Beargrass Creek and Farmington. The first tollgate was moved three times from its original location at Beargrass Creek and Baxter Avenue. (Keys, Morgan, and Neary 1992). This route was expanded as the Upper Louisville Nashville Turnpike by 1850. "This route...connected Louisville and Nashville via Bardstown and Glasgow and only added to the importance of Jefferson County and Louisville as a commercial and transportation hub." (Brent, Brent, and Allen 2003, 30).

Resources

Gas Station on Market Street (Right)

By the mid-1930s, the gasoline station had become more than a place to refuel one's car. Due to economic pressures brought on by the Great Depression, station owners began augmenting their gasoline sales with service revenues. Automobiles could now be washed and lubricated at the gas station. Initially, washing and lubricating were done outdoors. A large grease pit was dug out to allow for lubrication from underneath the car and a level concrete surface was supplied for washing. Apparently, this arrangement was not satisfactory, as station owners began to add lubricating and washing bays to their house-type stations. A common subtype of the period is the house with bays and canopy. The addition of a canopy to the house station made for comfortable all-weather pump access. The origins of this station are unknown, but it is a good example of a house station with bays and canopy.





1936 WPA Railroad Bridge

This bridge was constructed by WPA work crews in 1936 to provide an overpass for railroad traffic. WPA work projects were focused on public road improvements and constructed many of the road beds and bridges that we see today. The bridge itself is of a style that architectural historians call WPA Deco or WPA moderne.

Phoenix Hill/Phoenix Hill Brewery (Left)

This neighborhood, named for the scenic knoll around which it developed, was settled between 1830 and 1930 by German immigrants. The area was famous for entertainment centered around the Phoenix Hill Brewery and Park, an enterprise that hosted such famous citizens as John Philip Sousa and Presidents William H. Taft, Woodrow Wilson, and Theodore Roosevelt.

Cave Hill Cemetery (Left)

Louisville's famous cemetery, chartered in 1848, is a 300-acre masterpiece of landscape design, and final resting spot of many famous Kentuckians, including Colonel Sanders, the founder of the Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise. Colonel Sanders perfected his fried chicken recipe at the restaurant portion of his business, which was a combined motor court motel, cafe, and gas station known as Sanders Court & Cafe, on the eastern Dixie Highway, Route 25, in Corbin, Kentucky. The café is still open, complete with a museum dedicated to the history of Kentucky Fried Chicken.



Highlands

The term "Highlands" is used to denote a series of neighborhoods located along the rolling area southeast of downtown Louisville. The Highlands are bisected by Baxter Avenue and Bardstown Road to Taylorsville Road. Included is the original Highland neighborhood just south of Broadway. These neighborhoods developed between 1860 and 1940 and include a variety of residential, commercial, and institutional architecture set in either a grid or curvilinear street pattern. (JCJ)

Cherokee Triangle

This residential neighborhood was developed between 1870 and 1930 with most of its growth following creation of Frederick Law Olmsted designed Cherokee Park after 1890.

Bardstown Road Commercial Development

The Bardstown Road commercial corridor has always consisted of a mix of residential and commercial buildings, with commercial buildings anchoring strategic corners. Commercial buildings along the Bardstown Road corridor built in the early years of the twentieth century tend to have a very shallow setback from the street or none at all. This placement allowed for maximum visibility to passersby traveling at pre-auto speeds. First trolleys, then the interurban railroad, and finally the automobile brought commercial energy to the very street edge and most former residential buildings were altered with the addition of single-story storefronts.

Lentini's Little Italy Restaurant (Left)

The taste of Italy on Bardstown road since 1962, Lentini's is a good example of a fine family restaurant of the era, one of very few which survive. The architectural design of the building projects the image of old world charm.



Neighborhoods

Bardstown Road passes through a number of Louisville neighborhoods before turning southward into suburban Jefferson County. These include Tyler Park, Deer Park, Belknap, Bonnycastle, Highlands-Douglass, and Hayfield-Dundee.

Douglass Loop

Although Bardstown Road is packed with storefronts from Highland Avenue to the Watterson Expressway, one of the first commercial hubs started at the Douglass Loop, named for a streetcar turn at this commercial district.

Twig and Leaf Restaurant (Right)

Roadside restaurants emerged because motorists needed food just as much as their cars needed gasoline. Eating outside of the home was not an entirely new concept, since dining establishments could be found in hotels and along Main Street. The roadside restaurant distinguished itself from other eateries by being quick, convenient, and accessible. Automobile travelers could avoid the more formal downtown restaurants, but still enjoy a reliable meal without having to pack their own food. A variety of different roadside restaurants began to address the motorists needs. Family-style restaurants, walk-



up food stands, and drive-in restaurants were developed on the outskirts of town along the highway to serve Kentucky's motoring public. Attracting the auto traveler's attention through the restaurant's architecture became a significant way of communicating their presence in a sea of roadside dining establishments.

Notable for its wonderful neon sign and its Diner atmosphere, Twig and Leaf has been serving eggs over easy since 1941. The Twig and Leaf building is basically a rectangular-shaped concrete block structure with a flat roof and a glass curtain wall that covers most of the front facade. The Twig's hanging neon sign lets the potential diner know that it considers itself the "tops in food." The sign's fanciful cabinet is shaped like a leaf still attached to a twig, all highlighted in neon. The Twig and Leaf would probably have been originally known as a family style diner, though today it provides late-night meals for college students and party-goers alike.

Doup's Point

Located at Bardstown Road, Taylorsville Road, and Trevilian Way, Doup's Point is an irregular intersection formed by the property lines of three Doup family members. This area was more commonly known as an interurban and later a streetcar service stop.

Inn Logola (Highland American Legion Post) (Left)

Notable for its early 20th century log architecture, the Highland Legion Post was originally the



Inn Logola, which was surrounded by farmland when constructed circa 1929, was a popular roadside inn and nightspot. Entertainments often included an orchestra, with a 25-cent cover charge during the week and 40 cents on weekends. A "deluxe dinner" cost \$1.00. The American Legion acquired the building in 1940. The "log" structure plays on the important roadside architecture theme of log construction, which

we'll see more of when we get to the Lincoln sites further on in our trip.

Farmington Historic Marker (Left)

Farmington, marked on the left by a historic marker, but not visible from 31E, is the early 19th century home of John and Lucy Speed. It is an elaborately planned brick Federal style house, said to be based on a design created by Thomas Jefferson. John's son Joshua was a close friend to Abraham Lincoln, and Lincoln spent some time staying at Farmington in 1841. John Speed served as president of the Louisville-Bardstown turnpike company. (Brent, Brent, and Allen 2003, 30). The City of Louisville purchased the house in 1959 and opened it as a house museum.



Krispy Kreme Donuts (Right) Tour Stop

Beth Shapouri writes of the Bardstown Road Krispy Kreme:

Since its opening in 1965, this 24-hour store has been a Louisville favorite. Area residents love it so much, in fact, that it has become one of the company's top counter-sales locations, consistently making the top 15 and often the top 10 out of 150 Krispy Kreme doughnut-making stores nationwide. Louisvillians just can't seem to get enough of "America's Favorite Doughnut."

(<http://www.louisville.com/loumag/aug99/kk.shtml>)

Vernon Rudolph founded Krispy Kreme with a single store in Winston-Salem, North Carolina in 1937. The chain grew steadily in the 1940s and 1950s, and expanded rapidly in the 1960s. By the time the Bardstown Road store was built, Krispy Kreme used consistent corporate design principles to emphasize place/product packaging. The store's exterior appearance has changed little since its construction.

The famous Krispy Kreme neon sign is one of the remarkable elements of the site. The free-standing sign has both backlit and neon elements - the logo and the word "COFFEE" are backlit, while "DOUGHNUTS" is spelled out in channeled neon letters. The colors, metallic elements, and angular shapes of the sign play off the design of the building to reinforce the place-product packaging of the site as a whole.

A word about neon development is necessary to give an idea of its impact on roadside culture. The Frenchman Georges Claude patented the neon lighting process in 1915. As early as

1923 businesses began to use neon signs in Los Angeles. By the early 1930s, large neon signs caused a sensation at Times Square. The famous Las Vegas strip, with its large neon displays developed after 1944, and by the early 1950s, neon signs became a common sight all over the country. Neon lights consist of bent glass tubes filled with inert gases, usually neon, xenon, argon, or helium. The gases are lit with an electrical charge. By using various combinations of gases, mercury, and colored glass, sign makers can achieve over 40 colors. Neon signs are initially expensive to produce, but once made are very durable, lasting 20 years or more before the lights fade, when they can be repaired. Plastic signs, backlit with fluorescent lights, began to replace neon signs in the 1960s, and continue to be popular, although neon has enjoyed something of a renaissance in more recent years.

Neon revolutionized signage in the early 1930s. Businesses were able to advertise in all weather and lighting conditions the advantages of their establishment—whether it be a room vacancy or a doughnut, motorists took note of these signs because of their size and bombastic colors and designs. In sum, roadside selling became much easier because of this important invention.

We will stop at Krispy Kreme to sample their famous donuts and coffee.

Airport Inn (Left)

The Airport Inn was originally built in the 1960s as an Admiral Benbow Inn, a chain named after the establishment of the same name that figures prominently in the opening chapter of *Treasure Island*. It used to have a sign out front with the admiral in uniform with epaulettes. (Richard Jett 2004). The history of the Admiral Benbow chain is a little elusive, but it began in Memphis in 1961, founded by an entrepreneur named Allen Gary.



He was an early member of the board of Holiday Inn, and opened Admiral Benbow Restaurants in Holiday Inn Motels. He then left the board and launched the chain of Admiral Benbow Inns with the first building in Memphis in 1961, said to be the first multi-story motel in Memphis. Gary died in 1965, and after a promising start, the chain only grew to about a dozen locations. (Jim Hanas 2/21/2000). Several Admiral Benbow motels still exist, but appear to be mostly independent of one another.

Brown Suburban Hotel (Right)

The multi-story building on the right, roughly across from the Airport Inn, is the Brown Suburban Hotel. It originally had large rooftop letters spelling out the name. J. Graham Brown, who also built the historic downtown Brown Hotel, built the Brown Suburban Hotel in the early 1960s and envisioned this high-rise as his suburban flagship property. It never became as successful as the downtown Brown location.

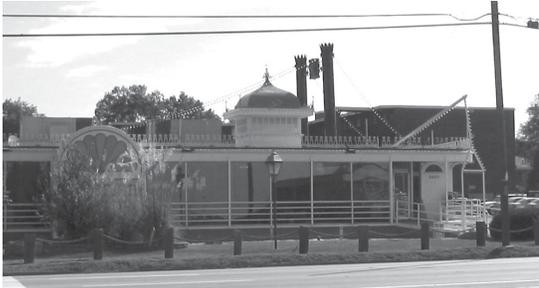
Showcase Cinemas (Right)

Designed by William Riseman Associates of Massachusetts, Cinemas 1 and 2, as it was then called, opened in 1965 as a new type of movie experience for Louisville's movie buffs.

The theater included a coffee house and an art gallery in the central glass-fronted atrium. The original part of the building is a good example of the then popular modernist style. The theater expanded to 13 screens in more recent years, but has recently closed and will no longer operate as a theater as the sellers want to avoid competing with their other locations. The building's fate is uncertain.

KingFish (Left)

KingFish is a local chain of seafood restaurants, named after a character in the Amos and Andy show, George "Kingfish" Stevens, who always was found at the lodge of "The Great Fraternity, The Mystic Knights of the Sea." The first KingFish was in downtown Louisville.



The Bardstown road location opened in 1962, the first building to have the characteristic paddlewheel boat design. (Laura Vance 2004) KingFish began as modest fish and chips joint, but currently has an extensive menu of fried or broil fish, shellfish, and steaks.

Bashford Manor Mall (Right)

A typical 1970s enclosed shopping mall with a sea of parking. The mall was built on the site of historic Bashford Manor, an Italiante-Second Empire house and renowned thoroughbred horse farm. As a type, the mall was developed to contain all the stores that were formerly located on Main Street and some located on the commercial strip. The idea was basically the same as the shopping center: free parking for cars, department stores and chain stores as anchors, and quality and variety of goods that by this time could not be found on Main Street. One of main differences was that malls allowed for a temperature and weather controlled pedestrian environment. In fact, it was a totally controlled environment.

The fate of the Bashford Mall is uncertain. The once thriving commercial center has now been relegated to the fate of the older downtown, except there is no attractive or durable architecture that might be preserved. The Bashford's plight is a common sight nowadays, with consumers and developers favoring smaller more diffuse shopping centers. Historically speaking, this phenomenon marks a return to the guiding principles behind 1940s and 50s commercial strip shopping developments.



Former Arby's (Right)

Forrest and Leroy Raffel founded Arby's in Boardman Ohio in 1964. The name is a take off on the initials "RB," for the Raffel Brothers or Roast Beef. For many years, the chain was distinguished by the rounded roof design, reminiscent of Conestoga style chuck wagons. Some of the early Arby's restaurants are still in use, but are heavily remodeled. The vacant building here is a very intact example of the earlier form, which was in use from the restaurant's founding to 1975.



"Arby's represented more than an attempt to reach a different caliber of customer. In conjunction with Red Barn, Pizza Hut, Chock Full o' Nuts and Kentucky Fried Chicken, it reflected an altered approach to restaurant imagery. This early- and mid-sixties generation of roadside restaurants shunned the prime source of 1950s fast-food imagery – futuristic structural modernism. The new chains chose from a variety of sources – rural buildings, quasi-Old West buildings, exotic or eccentric buildings prominent among them. Together they made it clear that the era of buildings that flexed their structural muscles was ending." (Philip Langdon 1986, 100).

Fegenbush Orchards Roadside Stand (Left)

A small, early-to-mid-century roadside fruit stand on your left, with a colorful ghost sign of an apple on the south gable end. Jefferson County agriculture includes a significant amount of truck farming: "the flat country immediately south of Louisville is bare and brown in winter, but green with potato plants and other truck-farming vegetables in summer." (Federal Writer's Project 1939, 289).



Small fruit and vegetable stands such as this one were once a common site on the Dixie Highway. The presentation of this building with the appearance of a small house reflects the emphasis on domestic imagery in commercial roadside

development of the 1920s-50s period. Critics of roadside architecture in the 1920s and 30s promoted the idea of using domestic styles to improve appearances and the image of the business located therein. (Liebs 1985 , 45).

Eastland Center (Right)

On the right hand side of the road, this 1960s strip mall has been remodeled, but still retains the original signage, a large pole sign with neon lettering, a clock, and a rising sun motif.

Collier's Court Motel (Right)

Collier's Court is a 1950s U-shaped motel with at least two periods of construction, and three periods of signage. The center sign, which is the oldest, is a good neon example with single tube letters announcing the name of the motel on a wave-shaped metal cabinet, with the vacancy information on a separate unit below; a later, probably 1970s tall pole mounted backlit sign with the single word "Motel" probably stems from the increased traffic speed of the improved roadway in that period; and a more recent changeable copy sign for easily updated messages was placed to the left of the original sign in the 1990s. The motel itself is constructed with long, flat Roman brick veneer, probably over a steel infrastructure.

Motels are one of the major themes of our tour, so a few words about their history and development will help place those we see in context. Lodging was an especially important element of roadside culture, since motorists often needed a place to stay overnight. Accommodations for travelers had existed prior to the automobile era. Taverns and inns provided rest and refreshment to nineteenth century stage coach and horse/carriage travelers. Hotels located in towns and cities and addressed the needs of those traveling by rail. The motel eventually became the dominant form of lodging for those traveling by car. It developed from a lineage of predecessors that include: autocamps, cabin camps, cottage courts, and motor courts. The rise in popularity of motels stemmed from a recognition of automobile traveler's needs — informality, privacy, and convenience. Motels were primarily mom-and-pop owned businesses before corporately-owned chains began to dominate the industry in the 1950s. Kentucky's motels varied in design during these early stages of roadside lodging, since there was no standard architectural model.

After World War II, auto tourism increased dramatically, since more people had access to cars and leisure time. Owners of roadside cottages and camps responded to this growth by constructing motor courts instead of cottage courts. Motor courts incorporated the room units under one roof. This transformation enabled the



owner to provide more rooms on the same amount of land. Eventually, the name “motor court” fell into disfavor due to its cottage court association, which was considered out-of-date in the post-war boom. After World War II, most owners named their lodging complexes “motels.”

Fern Bowl (Right)

A relatively recent, probably 1970s, bowling alley with a bowling pin included on their sign. Bowling is one of those entertainments, like miniature golf, that migrated from downtown locations to the roadside in the 1940s and 1950s. Earlier roadside bowling alleys often had very imaginative signage.



Goodlet Auto Sales (former Long John Silver's) (Left)

Part of the fun of roadside observation is to try to spot iconic buildings that have been put to new uses, like Pizza Huts that have become Chinese restaurants, or something like the example on your left, a former Long John Silver's restaurant converted to the office for an auto dealer. The Long John Silver's chain was founded in 1969, in Lexington, Kentucky. Many of us can recall the original building design, a fanciful weathered wharf-side shack. At some point, this concept was redesigned to the type we see in this example, a cleaner, post-modern version of the original. More recently, Long John Silvers has been co-branded with the older chain of A&W, and now the post-modern wharf buildings are abandoned,

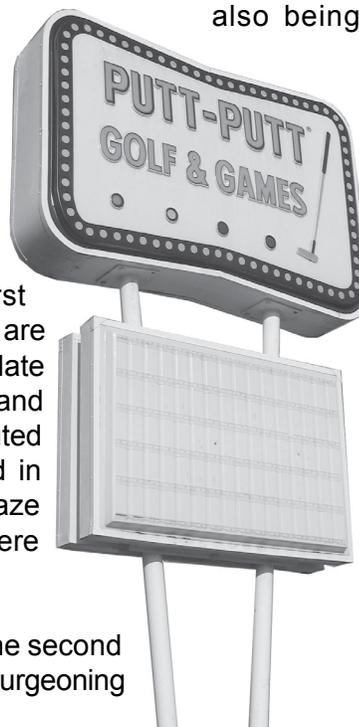


although many live on as other businesses.

Putt-Putt Golf and Games (Right)

Miniature Golf Courses are not the first business that most people think of when talking about early roadside commercial establishments. But mini-golf courses were among the first businesses to dot the roadscape in the mid-to-late 1920s. There are two main eras of development for miniature golf courses. In the late 1920s, mini-golf was a craze. The sport appealed to amateur and professional golfers—women, men, and children. Courses sprouted up on empty lots in the city, on rooftops, in resort areas, and in basements across Kentucky. By the 1930s, however, the craze had fizzled out, due to the effects of the Great Depression. There are very few courses extant from this era.

Putt-Putt Golf and Games, constructed in 1973, is a product of the second era of mini-golf course development, which began in the 1950s. A burgeoning



post-war economy combined with cheap land prices and a highly mobile population to revive the sport. Mini-golf was a pastime that the whole family could enjoy. Thus, franchises like Putt-Putt Golf were established across the state catering to the entire family. Most of these courses were located on commercial strips, just outside of town, or as an integral part of resort areas. Frequently, mini-golf courses were combined with restaurant/motel complexes. The appeal of miniature golf often attracted vacationers to one motel instead of another. Miniature golf courses from this later era are rapidly being lost to suburban housing and commercial developments.



Electronics Unlimited: Bungalow with 1960s commercial front (Left)



Early roadside efforts often capitalized on existing buildings. Adding a commercial front to an existing house was a common practice. The short commercial strip, probably of 1960s vintage, added to the front of an early 20th century bungalow is a typical example.

Gene Snyder Expressway

Originally called the Jefferson Freeway, and completed in the 1980s, The Gene Snyder Expressway forms an outer loop around the city. The road is not named for the science fiction author of such works as *Ecodeath* and *Crimson Comes the Dawn*, nor the pitcher who had a one season career with the Los Angeles Dodgers in 1959, but rather, for Marion Gene Snyder (1928-), the 11 term Republican Congressman from Louisville, who lives in retirement in Oldham County.

Bullitt County

Brief history

“Topographically, Bullitt County is a study in contrasts. Its diverse landscape includes broad, flat areas, wide valleys, rolling hills and steep sided, rugged knobs that rise high above their surroundings. In geographical terms the rolling far eastern part of the county lies in the Outer Blue Grass Region. The western and southern portion lies in the Knobs and the dissected upland behind Muldraugh Hill. In between these two regions are upland plain and alluviated valleys (Collins 1874: 100; McGrain and Currens 1978:15).

In general, the landscape of the county is quite hilly and Muldraugh Hill and the surrounding knobs are its most conspicuous topographic features. Bullitt County's 300 square miles are drained by the Salt River and its tributaries, the Rolling Fork and Floyds Fork. The Salt empties into the Ohio River at West Point, about twenty miles from Shepherdsville, in Bullitt County, a fact that made the river of great importance (McGrain and Currens 1978:15, Kleber 1992:140; Perrin 1887: 651)." (Brent, Brent and Allen 2003, 42-43).

Bullitt County was home to Native Americans over 15,000 years ago, in part because of the lush waterways and extensive salt stores. The first European American to explore the region, Captain Thomas Bullitt, surveyed the land in the early 1770s. The area began to be settled by Euro and African Americans. The county was formed in December 1793.

Current day Bullitt County is growing tremendously due to its proximity to the Louisville-Jefferson County Metro area. Sprawl like residential developments are located a "short" ride to Louisville.

The Dixie-Jackson Highway traverses the eastern-most edge of the county for approximately 6 miles on its way south. The landscape encountered is hilly and is mostly comprised of farmland.

Resources

There are no resources to be highlighted on our tour in Bullitt County. If we were passing through Mount Washington now bypassed by 31E ext, we could point out a few roadside oriented businesses. The 1939 WPA Guide to Kentucky says Mt. Washington, "was a flourishing community on the stage turnpike from Louisville to Nashville as early as 1800. The settlement was first known as The Crossroads, then as Mount Vernon; finally by order of postal authorities as Mount Washington." (Works Projects Administration Federal Writer's Project 1939, 290). Due to time constraints, we will not pass along this portion of the route.

Spencer County

Brief history

"Spencer County, with an area of 193 square miles, is one of the smallest counties in Kentucky. The topography, as in much of the Outer Blue Grass region, varies from rolling to hilly, with local relief of up to 150 feet. The Salt River bisects the county, flowing in a westward direction before eventually emptying into the Ohio River at West Point in Hardin County. Flat land is at a premium, most being found in the flood plains of the Salt River and its numerous tributaries, including Brashears, Elk, Plum, Big Beach, Simpson and Ash Creeks. These water-courses have cut valleys 200 to 250 feet below the surrounding uplands. Flat land may also be found on the ridge tops, which rise up to elevations of 800 feet in the eastern portion of the county.

Hundred of years before the first Europeans settled in Spencer County, prehistoric peoples made use of the region's resources. Evidence of their campsites, villages, and burial places are found throughout the County. Spencer County was first surveyed by European Americans in 1773 and settled in 1776. Spencer became a county in January 1824." (Brent, Brent and Allen 2003, 79).

Today, Spencer County is the fastest growing county in the state of Kentucky. Most of this growth is coming from the Louisville-Jefferson County metropolitan area. The rural quality

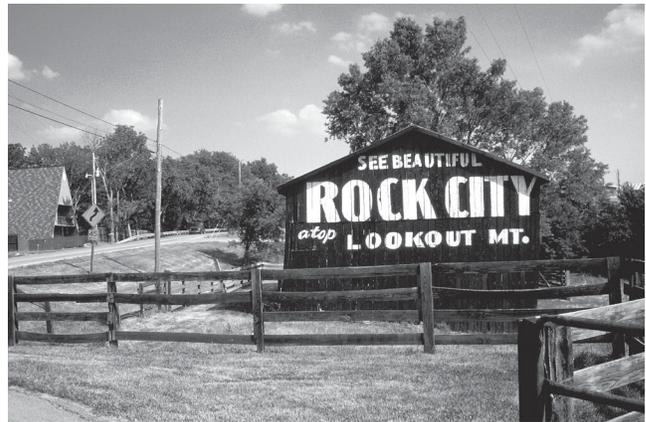
that we see here today could be obliterated by sprawl growth in the very near future, if no efforts are taken to manage it.

31E passes through the eastern tip of Spencer County for approximately 3 miles.

Resources

“See Beautiful Rock City” Barn (Right)

“See Rock City” is a ubiquitous (and repeated) presence on barns along the eastern and western portions of the Dixie Highways. Before the age of television and radio advertisements, the roadside was an excellent place to sell your wares. A captive motoring audience encountered numerous advertisements on a single trip. Products such as Burma-Shave shaving cream (<http://www.mc.cc.md.us/Departments/hpolscr/mthomas.htm>), sites such as Mammoth Cave, and signs asking travelers to “Trust in Jesus” were frequent sites along the road. Early on, billboards and signposts were methods to attract the traveling public. Painted barn advertisements, though, were an innovation pioneered by Garnet Carter, a land developer from Tennessee.



Carter initially pinned his hopes for fortune on a residential development, country club, and hotel atop Lookout Mountain near Chattanooga Tennessee. This development failed with the Wall Street Crash in 1929. Unheeded, Carter started over again with what was left of his enterprise: his wife’s elaborate 10-acre rock garden. Taking ceramic gnomes and other fanciful statuary from his popular miniature golf course, Carter marketed this new site as Rock City in 1932.

In an effort to build hype and bring tourists to Lookout Mountain, Carter hatched a scheme to paint barns across the region in exchange for advertising rights in 1936. Carter had painters include slogans like, “To miss Rock City would be a pity,” or the more straightforward, “See Rock City.” Eventually, farmers realized the advertising potential they had and began charging Carter for the space. Hence, the barn billboard was born. At the height of the craze, around 800 or 900 barns were painted in 18 states across the south. (Carver 1998, A-43)

This particular sign would have been a good investment for Carter, as this was one of the routes that passed relatively close to Rock City.

Salt River Overlook (Left) (Tour Stop)

“In the vicinity of the Salt River, US 31E suddenly comes alongside of a great bottom land (L) far below the highway. The bottom is zoned out like a model city into neat, flat fields of corn and soil-building crops. In the center are two small stands of second-growth timber, rivulets cross the entire area, and here and there are a few farmhouses, and barns. An ornamental stone wall by the roadside forms a parking space for those who wish to enjoy the view.” (Works Projects Administration Federal Writer’s Project 1939, 290).

Little has changed at the Salt River overlook since this was written nearly 70 years ago by the WPA. The bottom land is still dotted with farmhouses and neat fields of crops and the stone wall stands testament to the spectacular view. The origin of the lookout wall is somewhat unclear. Thought by some to have been created in the 1920s by the state highway



department, others trace its beginnings to a WPA work project. Whatever the case, the wall is an important reminder of the past history of the bustling Dixie-Jackson Highway.

Near the overlook is a small food stand consisting of a trailer with an awning and a picnic table.

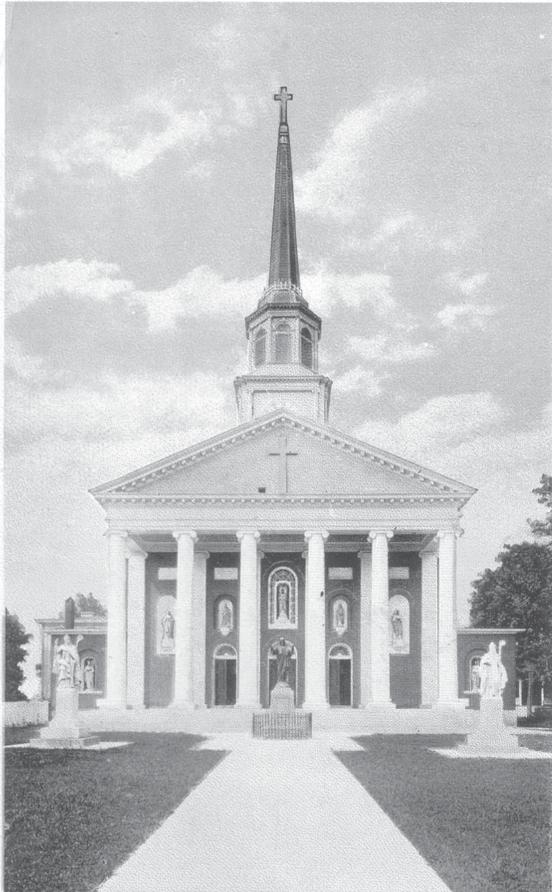
We will be stopping here briefly for photo opportunities.

Nelson County

Brief history

“Nelson County’s 437 square miles are distinguished by a variety of landforms. Rolling hills typify the eastern and north-central sections of the county while a relatively flat tableland between valleys is the setting of the county seat, Bardstown, in central Nelson County. The steep, conical hills and rugged ridges of the Knobs of western and southwestern Nelson comprise the county’s most striking scenery, with elevations in excess of 900 feet common. Rohan Knob, named for an early Catholic priest, Father DeRohan, is the county’s highest elevation at 1090 feet. Relatively low elevations in valleys between the knobs emphasize the dramatic relief of the surrounding hills. The lowest point in the county, less than 400 feet, is found along the Rolling Fork River, one of the primary streams in the county. Other important watercourses include the Salt River, Beech Fork and Chaplin River (McGrain and Currens 1978: 58, Smith 1971: 49).

Highly productive agricultural land is plentiful in the Bluegrass sections and more level tablelands while the Knobs are well known as an important source of high-quality hardwood timber. Limestone is most typical of the Outer Bluegrass section and a natural tunnel runs east to west under the City of Bardstown. Shale and sandstone is common in the Knobs and the occurrence of iron ore there gave rise to an industry of some importance in the 19th century (Collins 1874: 645; Kleber 1992: 676; Smith 1971: 49).” (Brent, Brent and Allen 2003, 113).



ST. JOSEPH CATHEDRAL, BARDSTOWN, KY. 69032

Post card of St. Joseph's Cathedral, courtesy of Dixie Hibbs

Nelson County was first settled by Native Americans, as can be seen in ceremonial mounds and earthworks throughout the county. By 1775, Euro and African Americans began exploring the area and settling along Cox's Creek and in the Bardstown area. Nelson County was formally established in January 1785. Among the most heavily populated areas in the Outer Bluegrass Region, the county became a focus for Catholic in-migration from Maryland. Nelson County has been known historically for its distilleries, highly productive agriculture, and impressive early architecture. Currently, Nelson County has experienced much sprawl-type growth as a bedroom community for the nearby Louisville-Jefferson County metropolitan area.

US 31E travels through central Nelson County for approximately 30 miles. The region's attractions were always touted as a main stopping point on the way south. My Old Kentucky Home, located a few miles off 31E, was among the tourist sites heavily advertised to visitors.

Home, situated amid large trees atop Federal Hill. Here, Stephen Foster put into words and music the scenes around him when he wrote his immortal song, 'My Old Kentucky Home... One of the rarest collections of art treasures is to be found in St. Joseph's Cathedral, at Bardstown, first cathedral west of the Allegheny Mountains. Here may be seen masterpieces by Murillo, Reubens, Jacob Hast, Van Bree and the Van Eyck Brothers...' (*In Kentucky* Spring 1940, 32) The article goes on to vividly illustrate other tourist offerings in the county.

"Bardstown, a tourist paradise, harbors in its vicinity a notable variety of avenues of interest. Chief among these is My Old Kentucky

Resources

High Grove Grocery (Right)

General stores existed alongside the road, serving coach riders and local residents well before the automobile age. But as times changed, they adapted well; improved roads and the opportunity to sell gasoline and auto accessories expanded business. Motorists could stop at the general store for a Coca-Cola, a snack, or a fill-up.



The typical general store has a gable front facing the road, and a front porch, much like a shotgun house. Inside, goods are displayed on shelves lining the walls and in glass cases sitting on the counters, behind which stood the proprietor. Most purchases were not self serve, although the customer could help themselves to cold drinks from a cooler. General stores frequently served as the local post office, pharmacy, and bus stop.

High Grove grocery was established in High Grove in the 1940s and has been a community gathering place as well as a stop for tourists on 31E. There has been a grocery/post office in High Grove at least since the 1880s. This particular store actually resembles an early 20th century American four-square house in shape and proportion with metal awnings added in the 1960s or 70s. It is constructed of concrete block, as many stores of this period are, and has a pyramidal roof. A stair rises to the second story of the building, which may have provided living space for the store owner.



Eighth Division Inn (Right)

This Inn was established shortly after the end of World War II. Local informants tell us that the Inn was named for the Division that the owner served in during the Second World War. Rather than offering rooms to the weary traveler, the Inn served up sandwiches and cold beer. Observe the ghost signs that note the “Division Inn,” and “Sandwiches.” The building has been converted, unsympathetically, to serve as a residence.

Louisville and Nashville Turnpike Markers (Left and Right)

As noted above, the L&N Turnpike was chartered in 1835 to provide an overland route from these two important urban areas. The Kentucky state legislature required that turnpike makers be included on the route, so that early travelers would be aware of how much longer they had to travel. This particular limestone marker, which has been moved from its original site, notes that it is 34 miles to Louisville and 5 miles to Bardstown. There are several more located on the roadside along the route.



Gypsy Drive In (Left)



In the 1950s, Kentuckians flocked to Drive-In Theatres to enjoy the latest movies from the comfort of their own automobiles. While there were only 16 drive-in theaters in the state in 1948, ten years later there were approximately 117 drive-in theatres along Kentucky’s major highways. Typically, these theatres were located on the edge of a town on a major arterial roadway marked by a theater marquee (sign) for maximum visibility. Drive-in theatre grounds were usually 10 to 20 acres.

The Gypsy Drive-In, 1949. Photo Courtesy of Loraine Stumph

The Gypsy Drive-In, opened in 1948, has many characteristics of the typical drive-in theatre. It is located on the edge of Bardstown and has its screen positioned close to the road to serve as a sign. The Gypsy has one element that many drive-ins did not possess: an apartment for a caretaker within the body of the concrete block screen. Regrettably, the theatre has been closed for many years and much of its historic fabric, like the speaker stands and ticket stand, has been removed.

Delaney's Grocery (Left)



A grocery has been operating on this site since at least the 1920s. In the 1940s, the grocery store was diversified through establishment of tourist cabins located directly to the rear of the current building. Gas pumps were included to the front of the store. According to local residents, the Delaneys have run the store since the early 1950s. Ironically, the store that had greatly profited from roadside traffic is set to be demolished to accommodate increasing

automobile traffic. It is set to be demolished in a road-widening project in 2005.

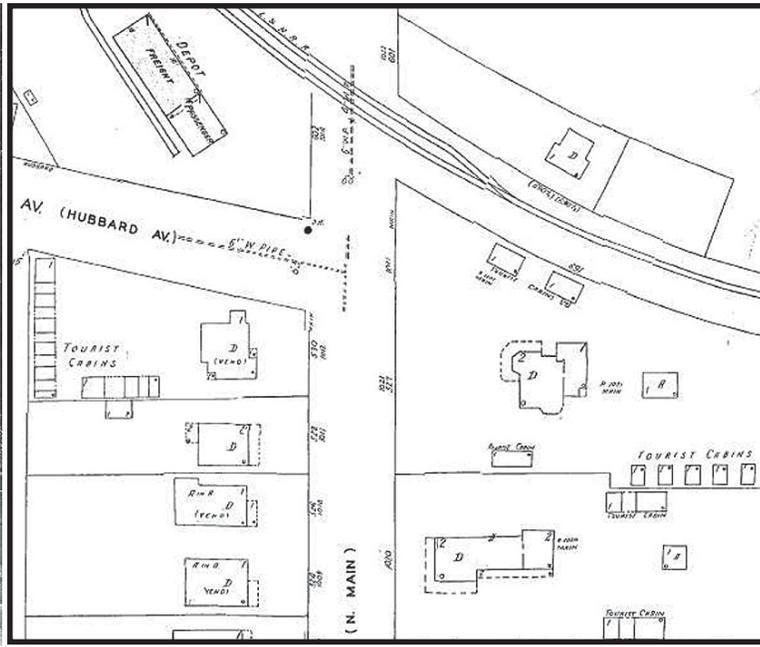
Tom Pig's Restaurant (Right)

Thomas Stocker, Jr., known locally as Tom Pig, opened this restaurant downtown in 1927. It quickly became a central gathering place for community news and gossip. The business and its distinctive sign moved to the 1938 stone veneered service station location you see here now in the 1980s. It has moved again recently to a building near the outskirts of Bardstown. The neon sign is typical of the 1920s-30s era of roadside advertisements. It hangs perpendicular to the building in an attempt to attract rapidly passing motorists and announces home cooked meals and lunch specials with one meat and a side. This sign is made of a single tubes of bent glass filled with inert gas, which lights with an electrical charge. The tubes are attached to a transformer inside the enameled metal box, which makes up the body of the sign.



Kentucky Dinner Train (Right)

The dinner train is not a historic resource, but a popular tourist destination. The train features vintage 1940s dining cars, and fine cuisine. The Bardstown branch of the R. J. Corman Railroad was originally constructed by the Bardstown and Louisville Railroad in 1860. The R. J. Corman Company purchased the 20-mile branch from CSX Transportation in 1987. The dinner train had its inaugural run in 1988.



Above Right, Detail of 1925-41 Sanborn Map of Bardstown. The Wilson Motel is center left at the corner of Hubbard and North Main streets. Note the “tourist cabins” at the Ramada Inn property across the street.

Wilson Motel (Right)

The Wilson Motel was founded in 1934 to serve the motoring public along the Dixie-Jackson Highway. The motel began when the owner, Cam Wilson, rented out rooms in their 1927 colonial revival cottage to passing travelers. The demand for accommodations must have been substantial, because in 1934 the Wilsons added two frame lodging buildings to the west of the house and converted the side portion of the house into a motel office. Garages may have been included directly next to the guest rooms. Fifteen rooms were included in all. The frame motel was bricked over in the 1950s and the pool was added in the 1940s.

The Wilson Motel is representative of the early era of tourist accommodation. Early motels were smaller than today’s motels. Typically, they were one-story structures that emphasized a horizontal profile. They also had fewer rooms than motels of the late twentieth century. In the case of the Wilson motel, the establishment developed from a domestic residence to a rooming house to a full-fledged motel. This phased type of development was common to early roadside motor courts. The Wilson Motel remains in business today.



Nelson County Courthouse

This county courthouse was constructed in 1892 in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. It replaced an earlier courthouse that had been on this site since the 1790s. The courthouse square is of a type typically found in Pennsylvania, known as the Lancaster plan. This plan incorporated a central courthouse into which 4 roads skirted the circumference. On each side of the square, businesses flanked the street. The focal point was the courthouse.



Image courtesy of Dixie Hibbs



My Old Kentucky Home, My Old Kentucky Home Motel, Stephen Foster Restaurant

We will not be passing by these sites; however, we thought it important to point out their importance to early roadside culture. My Old Kentucky Home State Park, as noted earlier, is a historic house and grounds associated with Stephen's Foster's musical genius. The site, which includes Federal Hill mansion, is important locally for its association with the Rowan family, their servants, and slaves. The site is also well known as the inspiration for Foster's My Old Kentucky Home song.



Among the tourist attractions to the state park is My Old Kentucky Home, an outdoor musical drama celebrating the life of Stephen Foster. The first outdoor drama was the Lost Colony, performed on North Carolina's Roanoke Island in 1940. (Hollis 1999, 118). They became increasingly popular in the South throughout the 1950s, due to a growing tourist trade. The height of their popularity was probably in the 1960s and 70s.

In the early 20th century, tourist sites and services catering to tourists began to take on names that suggested association with important local, regional, or national events. This tactic was essentially a marketing ploy to bring in more business to the establishment. Appeals were sometimes made

to history, domestic imagery (like the English cottage) or to fantastic events or characters with no relation to the area, like giant wigwams. There was little consideration of product or market standardization, as most services and sites were locally or regionally owned. As historian Tim Hollis states, "In the days of the old two-lane federal highways, 'individuality' was the key word in describing the roadside landscape. With the exception of such giants as the chain of Howard Johnson's restaurants, corporate America did not heavily intrude upon private enterprise along the older highways. Restaurants, motels, and even attractions themselves were owned by individual families, some of whom were kept and maintained for several generations. This individuality extended into the advertising that could be found along the highway..." (Hollis 1999, 12).



Heavily traveled roads usually had numerous themes, such as Lincoln, the caves, or Stephen Foster. In Tennessee and Georgia, the themes were the Civil War and the mountains; in Florida, tourists experienced imagery derived from the beach and the ocean. In Kentucky, themes were varied, but generally were connected to local history. We will be referring to these themes along the Dixie Highways throughout this tour.

Talbott's Tavern (Left, directly beside the court house)

This tavern has operated continuously in this location since 1779. It is said to be among the oldest surviving stagecoach inns in the nation. Upon the coming of the age of the automobile,



Image courtesy of Dixie Hibbs

Talbott's thrived because of its central location and attention to the needs of car owners, including establishing a service station and parking space for the new vehicles. According to a 1915 advertisement, "A good hotel where special attention is given to automobilists." (Hibbs 1989, 128).



Maxine's (Bard's Tavern) (Right)

This section of the Dixie-Jackson Highway was among the last to be fully paved with concrete. Historically known as Bard's Tavern, the building was constructed upon the repeal of

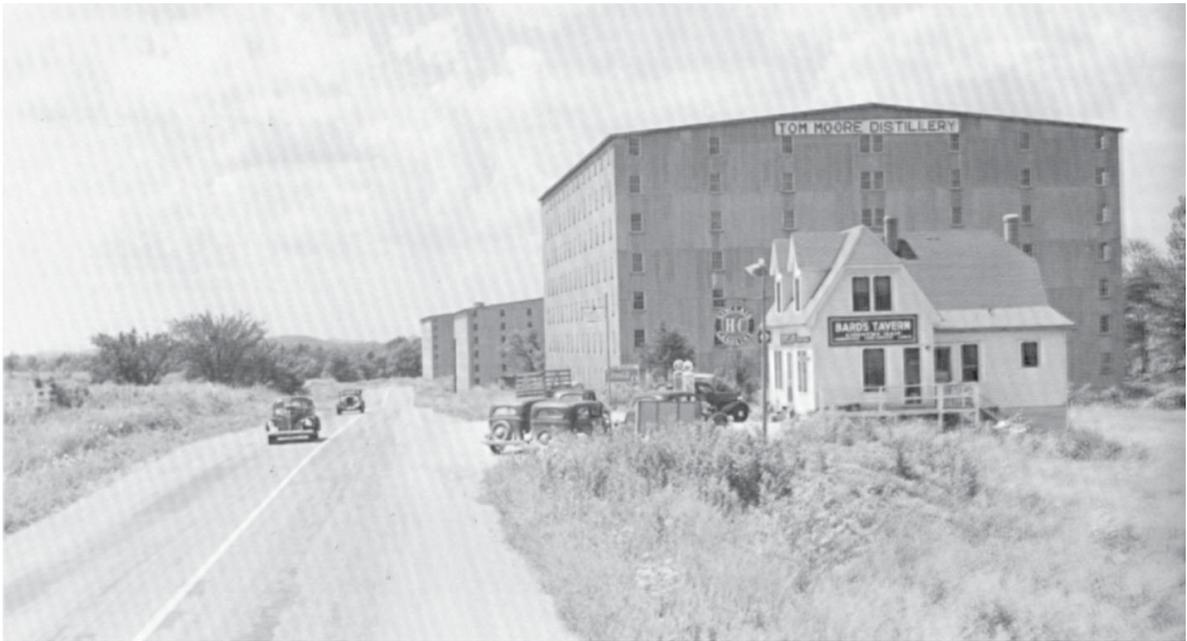


Photo from *Nelson County: A Pictorial History*, by Dixie Hibbs, original from the Library of Congress, Farm Security Administration collection.

prohibition in the mid-1930s to serve the thirsty traveling public. Though altered, the building continues to serve its original purpose.

Tom Moore Distillery (Right)

The distillery was originally founded in 1889 and sold to Barton Brands, Ltd in the 1940s. These warehouses were constructed after the repeal of prohibition in 1934. The size, shape, proportion, and fenestration are typical for Kentucky distillery warehouses.

Red Carpet Inn (Right)

This motel is representative of 1960s and 1970s motel designs. Motels of this era typically have exterior entrances to individual rooms, in order to save money on formal space. In this instance, a covered porch provides shelter from the elements. Also fairly common is the use of colonial revival design elements, like the two-story pediment, the cupola, and the hipped roof, to suggest a traditional family atmosphere. Architectural historians refer to this type of motel as a Highway Hotel, because of its association with limited access freeways and corporate chain design homogeneity. Many historians believe that the Highway Hotel and the corporate chain in general marked the end of an era in which commercial architecture was divorced from regional and local character.

This motel may have started out as a Ramada Inn, a corporate chain initiated in 1954. It was constructed to capitalize on tourist trade from the Bluegrass Parkway.



Culver Gas Station (Left)

No other type of building was more influenced by the rise of the automobile than the gasoline or service station. Before 1910, there was little need for gas stations, as automobile ownership was restricted to wealthy hobbyists. In order to obtain gasoline, during this time, the motorist was required to visit the local kerosene refinery on the city outskirts and lug a bucket of fuel to the vehicle. After Henry Ford perfected the mass production of motor cars, and thus lowered their price in 1908, car ownership became much more common. Typically, the local hardware



store or carriage maker added a gas pump to the front stoop of their busy central city location. This arrangement proved less than satisfactory, though, because cars lined up to refuel, blocking major urban thoroughfares. The gasoline station building, then, was created to serve Kentucky's ever-growing motoring public. Between the 1920s and the 1960s, designs for these buildings evolved to reflect the economy, the influence of the consumer, and the expansion of the auto service industry.

Culver's Gas Station is a rare example of a "house" type station that incorporates an actual house. Small house-like stations were popular in the 1920s and 1930s, because they associated the somewhat controversial gas station with more acceptable domestic imagery. Unlike the earlier shed type filling stations, the house-type gas stations were designed to accommodate an attendant, auto accessories, and a space for men's and women's restrooms. Gas pumps were located in an unprotected area directly in front of the building. In the case of the Culver Station, the pumps are located a few feet away from the office under a free-standing canopy, seemingly constructed in the 1960s or 1970s.

The log cabin imagery was probably intended to play on the iconography of the Lincoln sites, shortly down the road, as well as to attract customers to this unique gas vendor.

Bathtub Mary (Left)

Though not a roadside resource per se, Bathtub Marys are a ubiquitous site along this "Catholic stretch" of 31E. Bathtub Marys are a type of folk art yard shrine erected by Catholics intended to express public devotion to the Virgin Mother. In some areas, like Italian Catholic sections of New York, literal bathtubs are used to form the alcove. In this instance, the concrete statue of Mary is ensconced in what appears to be a concrete mass-produced altar structure, flanked by two floral jugs. According to yard art historian Joseph Sciorra, "The alcove replicates the sacred niche in a church, and its association with this official repository of the saints has imbued this form with iconic powers. Consequently, this inverted U-shaped appears repeatedly in this religious folk art." (Sciorra 1989, 189).



Concrete Crosses (Left)



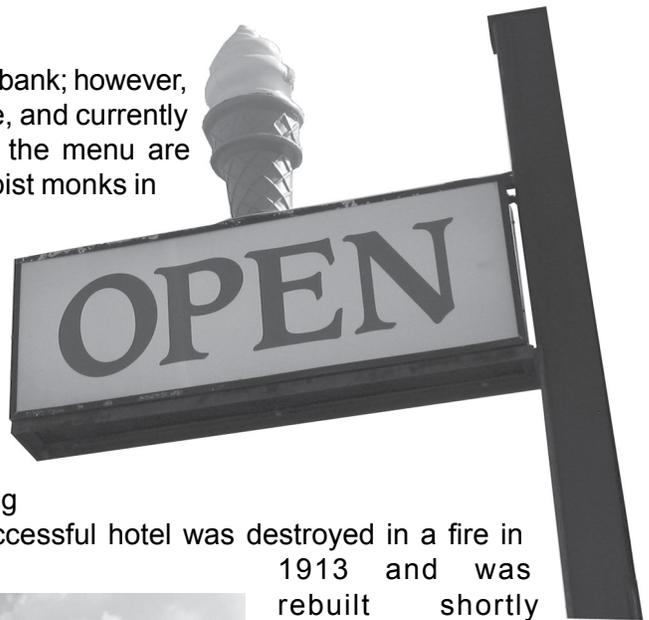
in the 1930s. The earlier crosses are wooden and smaller than the later 1940s and 50s crosses, which are made of concrete and can be fairly large. Mayes died in 1986. By this time, he had erected religious signs in every state and in several foreign countries. (Carver 1986, A-46).

The Cream Station (Right)

This structure was originally built to house a bank; however, it has served as a general store, post office, and currently a local restaurant. Among the items on the menu are cheese and fruitcakes made by local Trappist monks in the nearby Gethsemane Monastery.

Sherwood Inn (Left)

There has been a hotel and tavern on this site since 1875. The hotel was constructed to take advantage of coach traffic along the Bardstown-Louisville Turnpike and traffic from the rail line running through New Haven. This immensely successful hotel was destroyed in a fire in



1913 and was rebuilt shortly thereafter. The new Sherwood Inn continues to provide overnight accommodations and dining for visitors and New Haven residents.

Larue County

Brief history

“Larue County’s 263 square miles lie in a region of south central Kentucky often referred to as the “Pennyrile, “after the pennyroyal plant, a native mint common to the area. A variety of landforms are present in the county making for impressive and constantly changing scenery. To the west a relatively level landscape is marked by the sinkholes of a karst topography while to east the land becomes more undulating and normal stream drainage patterns are the rule. Most dramatic are the conical hills and rugged ridge country of the Muldraugh escarpment in the north and northeast.

These timbered hills, part of a region known as The Knobs, sometimes exceed 1000 feet in elevation. The appearance of these hills is made more impressive since they rise from valley flats of around 440 feet. The lowest elevation in the county is found in just such a situation along the floodplain of the Rolling Fork River at 421 feet. Larue’s highest elevation is recorded at 1080 feet along its border with Taylor County and the county seat of Hodgenville is situated at 730 feet. Principal streams include Otter and Nolin Creeks and the Rolling Fork of Salt River (Collins 1966: 456; Kleber 1992: 536; McGrain and Currens 1978: 44; Perrin 1888: 949).” (Brent, Brent, and Allen 2003, 177-79).

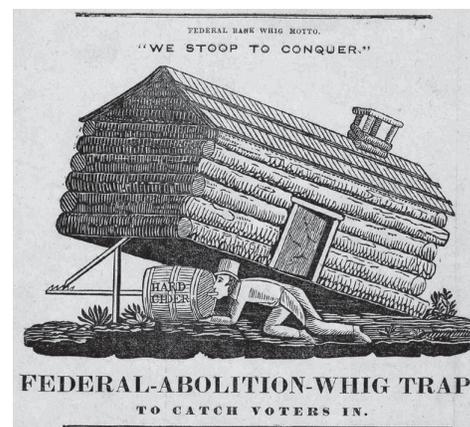
Larue County was formed in 1843. The county is named for John Larue, an ancestor of John Larue Helm, a prominent politician at the time the county was formed. (Brent, Brent, and Allen 2003, 180). Prehistoric occupation included both hunters and agriculturalists. European explorers entered the area as early as 1774, but the area did not have the finest farmland, so settlement remained sparse and farms small. (Brent, Brent, and Allen 2003, 177-79)

In 2000, the county population was 13,373 in a land area of 263.20 square miles, an average of 50.8 people per square mile. (<http://www.uky.edu/KentuckyAtlas/21123.html>).

The birth of Abraham Lincoln in the area (it was then still Hardin County) in 1809 is the source of the region’s major interest as a tourist destination and of the major theme of Lincoln iconography that we will explore in this segment of the tour.

Log Iconography and Lincoln Iconography

Well before Lincoln became President, the log cabin began to shift in popular perception from mundane practical shelter to iconic symbol of American pioneering spirit and fortitude. Although there were earlier instances, the use of the log cabin as a metaphor really arrived in popular culture in propaganda produced for the Presidential campaign of 1840. William Henry Harrison’s opponents disparagingly associated him with log cabins and hard cider, a popular and cheap intoxicating beverage akin to beer. Harrison embraced the epithet as a way of creating a populist reputation. Log cabins played a prominent role in the campaign propaganda for both sides, but Harrison won. Later, the association of the log cabin with stories about the childhood of Abraham Lincoln or with slavery, most



Campaign Propaganda, circa 1840 (Library of Congress)



Commemorative transfer-printed Lincoln birthplace plate, Lincoln Museum, Hodgenville

parks: thousands of structures in log cabin style, from pavilions to tourist cabins, were built in the nation's parks by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Depression.

Adding to the log cabin metaphor, the association of the symbol with Abraham Lincoln's birthplace, his boyhood home, and other sites such as New Salem, Illinois made the cabin shorthand for Lincoln himself. Thus, many roadside sites in Lincoln Tourism areas, both in Kentucky and elsewhere, adopted log cabin imagery to evoke Lincoln. In addition, depictions of Lincoln entered popular culture with similar associations: honesty, fortitude, bravery, and the rise from humble beginnings to greatness. Lincoln and his log cabin appeared on commercial buildings, commemorative plates, flour sacks, cigar boxes, etc. Lincoln imagery is connected to the log cabin in much the same way that George Washington is associated with the ax and the cherry tree.

Resources

Athertonville

Athertonville grew up around the Atherton family distillery, discussed below. At one time it was the second largest town in Larue County after Hodgenville, but it rapidly declined after prohibition shut down the distillery. (Brent, Brent, and Allen 2003, 186)

famously in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, elaborated and cemented the image further. Not coincidentally, at the same time the metaphor of the log cabin took hold of the American psyche the building technique itself was rapidly being displaced by new construction technology—the balloon frame.

Given that the log cabin was an entrenched cultural symbol by the dawn of the twentieth century, its exploitation by entrepreneurs to promote tourist destinations in the automobile age was inevitable. They dressed up motel cabins, gas stations, and eateries as log cabins, and restored or reconstructed log cabins of famous ancestors as museums, such as the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace and the Boyhood Home. The log cabin was also particularly popular in the development of



“Enjoy Kentucky: We Don’t Rent Pigs” Sign (Right)

Many passers-by wonder about the origins of this curious sign. The quote is from Larry McMurtry’s *Lonesome Dove*. According to an anonymous poster on the Kentucky Cycling website (<http://www.kycyclist.org/>), the owner, Scott, is a *Lonesome Dove* fan, and he put up the sign some years ago as a joke. Since then, according to the cyclist who spoke with Scott, hundreds of people have stopped to get their picture taken in front of the sign. It blew down in a windstorm a few years back and the concern about its going missing generated the postings on the cycling billboard, but thankfully since then Scott has put the sign back up.



Athertonville Distillery (Right)

Located at the southern end of town, Athertonville Distillery’s history can be traced as far back as the 1790s when Aaron Atherton settled in the area and began a small distillery operation. His son Peter Atherton ran the family business next. Peter’s son, John Atherton really grew the business, making it into “the largest sour mash distillery in the world” by the 1860s. He developed railroad connections to the plant, and the town of Athertonville naturally sprang up around the operation to house workers and their families. Prohibition in 1918 closed the distillery and sent the town into decline. After repeal, the plant was reopened, and several new buildings constructed for the operation. Seagram’s purchased the distillery in 1946 and ran it into the 1970s. The main distillery building was torn down in 1980, but several buildings associated with the plant remain standing. Currently these structures are used by a barrel stave and pallet manufacturer. (Brent, Brent, and Allen 2003, 186-187).



“Abraham Lincoln’s First School” Historic Marker (Right)

Text of Marker:

Lincoln’s formal education began in a primitive log cabin near this site. While the Lincoln family was living on Knob Creek, he and his sister Sarah attended ABC schools for a short period of time. First school taught by Zachariah Riney; the second by Caleb Hazel. The Lincolns’ home stood 2 miles south on the old Cumberland Road.

Aaron Atherton House (Right)

On your right, shortly after we leave Athertonville, is a National Register listed I-house, the home of Aaron Atherton, the distiller. A portion of the house is log and is said to be the original 18th century log house that Aaron built when he came to the area.

Lincoln's Boyhood Home (Right)

"In the early 20th century Larue County became a center for Lincoln memorials and artifacts. Lincoln's birthplace south of Hodgenville became a national site in 1916 and as roads improved during the 1920s thousands of tourists traveled to the county to visit his birthplace memorial." (Thomason 1988).



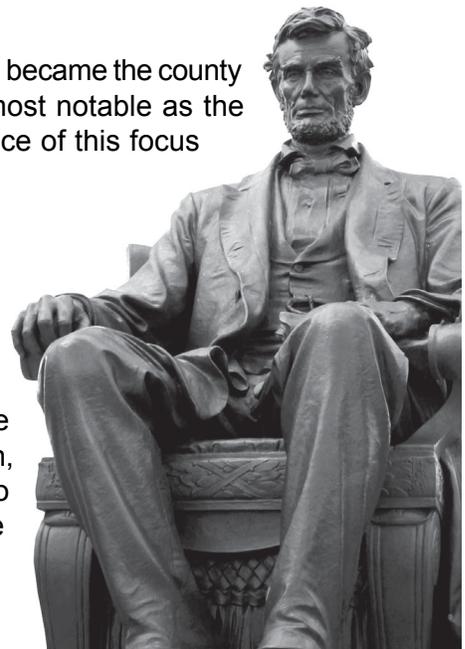
Abraham Lincoln's Boyhood Home was established in 1933 to honor President Lincoln and take advantage of the growing tourist trade in the region. Hattie and Chester Howard purchased this farm, which was owned by the Lincoln family from 1811 to 1813, in 1931 to cash-in on the fame achieved by the nearby Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site. The complex consists of a 1933 log tavern and restaurant, a picnic area, and an old log house associated with the Gollaher family who lived in the farm after the Lincolns' tenure. The log house was meant to serve as a replica of the one the Lincolns had lived in. The site was promoted by the Lincoln Memorial Highway Association in the 1920s and 1930s and remains a popular destination for daytrippers across Kentucky. The National Park Service recently purchased the Boyhood Home.

Hodgenville

Founded in 1818 by an English-born Virginian, Hodgenville became the county seat of Larue upon its creation in 1843. The town is most notable as the cradle of Abraham Lincoln's youth. You will see evidence of this focus throughout the town.

Lincoln Statue

This monument in the center of Hodgenville depicts Lincoln seated on a granite pedestal. The sculptor Adolph Weinman of New York, a student of Augustus St. Gaudens, made the statue in his Rhode Island Studio. He was commissioned by the Lincoln Monument Commission, established by the Kentucky State Legislature in 1904 to create a monument commemorating Lincoln. The statue was dedicated on May 31, 1909. (Thomason 1988).



Lincoln Museum (Tour Stop)

The Lincoln Museum in Hodgenville is located in two historic commercial buildings on the town square. 72 Lincoln Square, built in 1914-15, used to be a general store. 64-66 Lincoln square, 1921, was once the G.O. Kirkpatrick clothing store. (Brent, Brent, and Allen 2003, 193). The Lincoln Museum opened to the public in 1989, created the previous year through local donations and volunteer efforts. The museum features a series of vignettes depicting various episodes of Lincoln's life from his boyhood at the Knob Creek Farm to his death at Ford's Theater. The second floor contains historic objects associated with Lincoln and an art museum of Lincoln related pieces.



We will stop at the museum for a half hour to tour the facility.

Ruthie's Lincoln Freeze (Right)

On your right as leave town, a small restaurant of recent vintage that exploits the long local tradition of Lincoln iconography in its name. Other local businesses to do so include the Lincoln Plaza, the Lincoln National Bank, and the now closed Lincoln Firestone tire store, a short distance from Ruthie's, on your left, and the Lincoln Jamboree, further down the road, on your right. The Grocery and Fast Food stop across the road from Ruthie's uses log cabin imagery to evoke Lincoln.



Cruise Inn Motel (Left)

On the left is the Cruise Inn, which includes a motor court, a general store clad in log cabin veneer, and campsites.

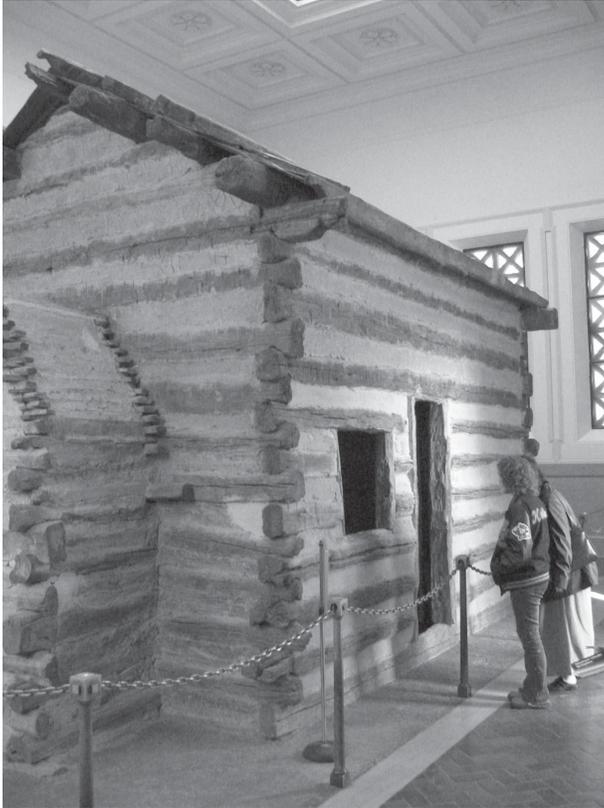
Vacant Motel (Right)

Across the road from the Cruise Inn, a 1950s motor court in a very long, straight building. Both of these motels would have served tourists coming to and from the Lincoln sites.



Abraham Lincoln Birthplace and National Historic Site (Right) (Tour Stop)

In December 1808, Thomas and Nancy Lincoln, with their one-year old daughter Sarah, left their home in Elizabethtown and moved to a 348-acre farm three miles south of Hodgen's Mill, present-day Hodgenville. They paid \$200 for the farm on Nolin Creek where the land was stony and not known for its productivity. Nancy was expecting when the family moved and the following February 12th she gave birth to a boy, who was named Abraham, after his grandfather.



After two years on the Sinking Spring farm the family moved again, buying a farm ten miles to the northeast on Knob Creek. Three years later the family would move again, leaving Kentucky to go to Indiana.

The beginning of the 20th century saw a nationwide movement to memorialize Abraham Lincoln. In 1894 New York businessman A.W. Dennett purchase the Sinking Spring farm and subsequently exhibited what was then believed to be the cabin where Lincoln was born in various cities throughout the country. In 1905 Robert Collier, publisher of the popular *Collier's Weekly*, purchased the farm, but not the cabin, from Dennett. The following year Collier and such notables as Mark Twain, Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, and William Jennings Bryan formed the Lincoln Farm Association to preserve Abraham Lincoln's birthplace. The group purchased the cabin and raised the money to build a memorial in which it could be housed. In 1909 President Theodore Roosevelt laid the

memorial's cornerstone. Two years later, the neo-classical structure was dedicated by President William Howard Taft. The memorial and Sinking Spring farm became a National Park in 1916. In 1959 the site was designated the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site.

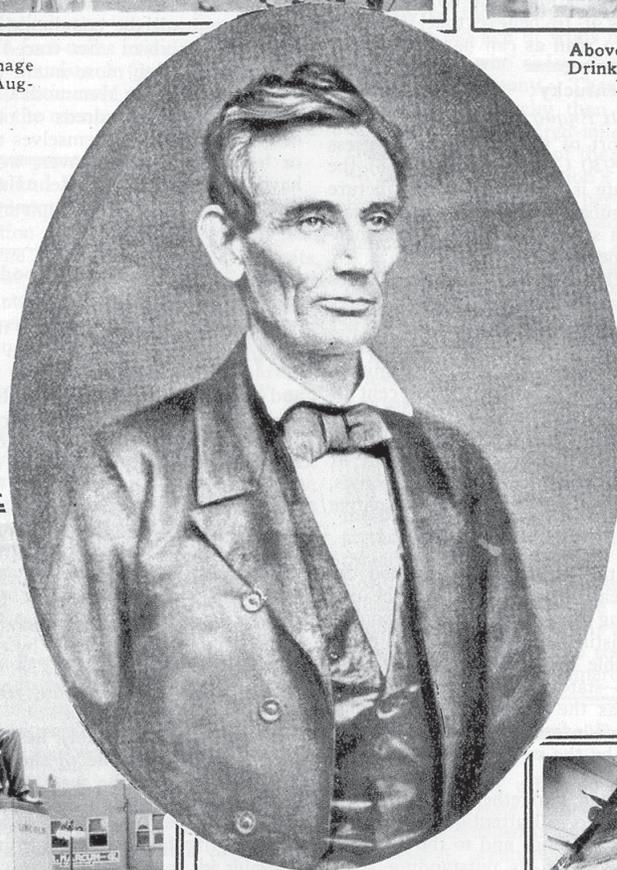
The fact that the cabin in the memorial is of questionable authenticity should by now be well known. For a detailed narrative of the cabin's complex history, the reader is referred to the *Abraham Lincoln Birthplace Historic Resource Study*, available on-line at <http://www.nps.gov/abli/hrs/hrs.htm>. In short, though, the present cabin was constructed from logs taken from a cabin on adjacent land that may have been two stories tall in reality. It has been repeatedly dismantled and reconstructed for various exhibits around the country, and at one point the logs were mixed, ironically enough, with those of the "equally suspicious cabin described as Jefferson Davis's birthplace," shortly after they were both displayed "for a price on the midway at the Tennessee Centennial Exposition in Nashville." (Blythe, Carroll, and Moffson 2001, Chapter 2). When the memorial building was constructed, it was found that the cabin would not fit inside, so the logs were cut to make a smaller cabin, reducing it from sixteen by eighteen to twelve by seventeen feet.



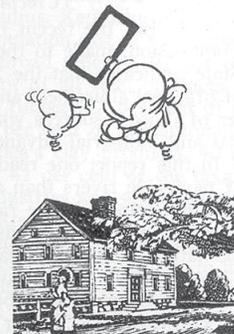
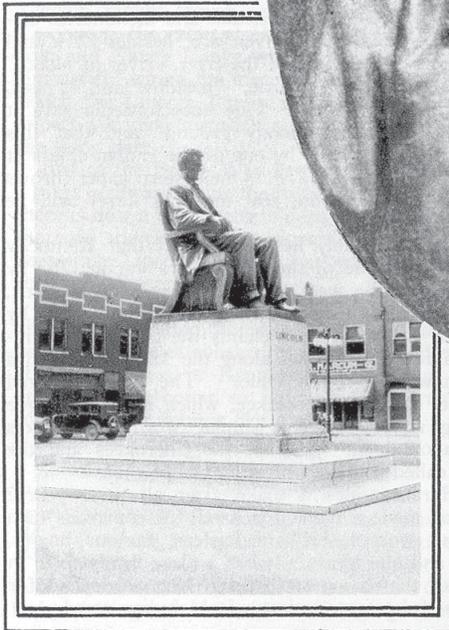
Above: Indiana's pilgrimage to Lincoln Birthplace, August 25.



Above: Drinking at Lincoln Spring, Lincoln Birthplace.



Below: The Lincoln Statue at Hodgenville, erected by United States Congress and State of Kentucky.



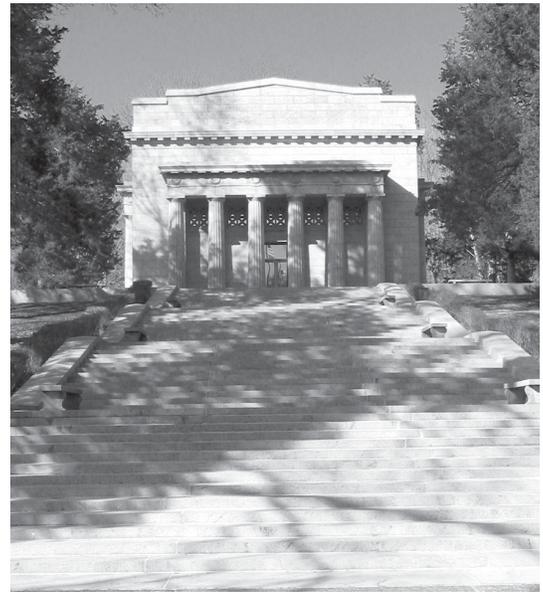
Below: The Lincoln Cabin within the National Memorial at Lincoln Birthplace.



LINCOLN IN 1858

Photo Property of Wm. H. Townsend.

John Russell Pope designed the memorial building in which the cabin is housed. Pope is well known for his classical revival designs, particularly in the Nation's capitol, where his work includes Constitution Hall of the Daughters of the American Revolution, 1929; the National Archives Building, 1933-35; the Jefferson Memorial, 1937; and the National Gallery of Art, 1937-41 (Blythe, Carroll, and Moffson 2001, Chapter 3). This structure has been a mecca for Lincoln enthusiasts and heritage tourists since its inception in the early 1900s.



Nancy Lincoln Inn (Adjoining the Birthplace Site)

The Nancy Lincoln Inn was developed in 1928 by local business man Jim Howell to capitalize on the Lincoln tourist trade. By the late 1920s, interest in Lincoln and the Civil War era in general had blossomed. Historic sites associated with Lincoln became especially large draws among the newly mobile population. In turn,

there was a great demand for good roads and services, like motels, stores, and restaurants in Kentucky's "Land of Lincoln." To accommodate this boom in the tourist trade, entrepreneurs established services that catered to travelers, often with seemingly important connections to the Lincoln family. The Nancy Lincoln Inn is an important and relatively unaltered example of an early 20th century tourist store and cabins.



The main building is constructed of unhewn chestnut logs and chinked with concrete, in keeping with the log cabin theme in the region. In fact, tourists were offered overnight lodging in one of four small log tourist cabins situated directly to the left of the main Inn, and overlooking the important Birthplace site. The main building houses a restaurant, souvenir sales room and displays relating to Lincoln's life. Although the restaurant and tourist cabins are no longer in operation, the Nancy Lincoln Inn, a successful tourist attraction since its construction, still offers park visitors a place to purchase snacks and souvenirs. (Brent, Brent, and Allen 2003, 197; Thomason 1991, Site # LU 58).



Magnolia

Originally a stagecoach stop on the Louisville and Nashville Turnpike, the community now is a crossroads between US 31E and KY 470. The town was reportedly named for the first postmaster's wife in 1851. (Remnick 1984, 185).

Shell Gas Station (Right)

This abandoned gas station in sadly poor condition is an example of the streamlined oblong box with service bays popular in the 1950s and 1960s.

Oblong box service stations were usually built of steel frame construction wrapped in porcelain enamel tiles and had large plate glass windows. The large sometimes canted windows served the purpose of showcasing the station's line of tires, batteries, and accessories (TBA) that station owners relied on for extra revenues. Perhaps the most significant difference between the older house gas stations and their more modern oblong box successors was the desire to draw attention to the buildings themselves. No longer was there an effort to blend gas stations in with their surroundings; large corporate station owners, like Shell, went to great pains to set apart their station from domestic (house) architecture. By the mid-1950s, nearly all service stations were designed with this in mind.



Hart County

Brief history

“Hart County's 416 square miles are home to some 17,500 inhabitants. Elevations in the county range from 421 to 1156 feet above sea level. Geographically, the county is divided into three parts: the Green River country, the caves region, and the Pennyroyal, called the “barrens” by the early settlers. Geologically it lies, for the most part, in the Mississippian Plateaus region of Kentucky. This region is characterized by a diversity of landscape features including the knobs country, sinkhole plains, caves, wooded escarpments and sandstone capped plateaus. The County is drained by two principle rivers: the Nolin and the Green. The Nolin River, which flows into the Green, forms the western boundary of Hart County. The Green River, which is deeply entrenched below the sinkhole plain, winds through the center of the county, flowing east to west in a series of loops and bends.” (Brent, Brent, and Allen 2003, 213) The county seat is Munfordville.

The area that became Hart County was home to Native Americans for many centuries. European and African American explorers, including Daniel Boone, entered the area as early as the 1770s. Settlers followed soon after the Revolutionary War, many of them laying claim to land grants. The County was created on January 19, 1819 out of parts of Hardin and Barren counties, and named for Captain Nathaniel G. T. Hart, a Lexingtonian who fought in the

War of 1812. Notable Civil War activity in the region includes the battles of Munfordville and of Rowlett's Station.

Although the primary economic activity in the county has always been agricultural, several mills were located in Hart County. Other industries included a gunpowder works, in addition to extractive and manufacturing industries. There has been a modest amount of oil drilling. A pumping station in Canmer received oil and transported it to a refinery in Louisville via a 4-inch pipeline in the 1930s. (Brent, Brent, and Allen 2003, 234). There was even a small local refinery. According to local sources, Roger Woodson, an African American Entrepreneur, refined gasoline at his farm in Uno and sold it to motorists on 31E in the 1930s. Woodson took advantage of another growing economic opportunity in the region: the tourist trade.

Resources

“See 7 States From Rock City Atop Lookout Mt.” barn (Right)

Another example of the famous barn advertisement for Rock City

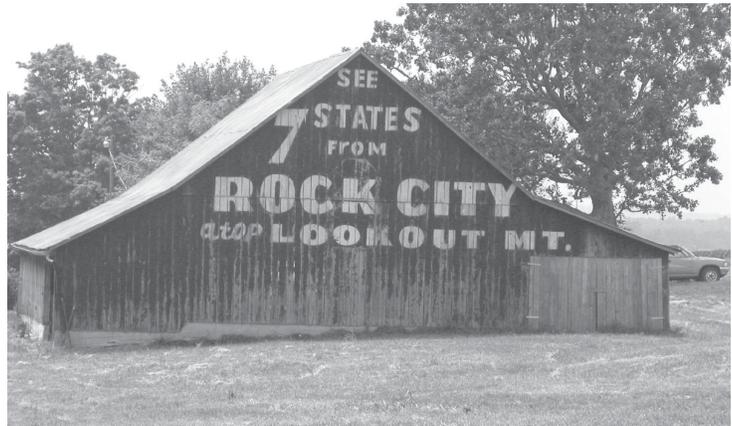


Photo: Sandra Wilson



Pikeview Road (Left)

We will divert from 31E to travel a short section of road now called Pikeview, which is a section of 31E that was bypassed when the road was improved in the late 1940s. With the exception of the asphalt paving, this section of road appears much as it would have in that time.

General Stores (Right and Left)

On Pikeview Road, at the intersection with Route 936, are two early 20th century stores located diagonally across from one another. The store on your left was known as McCubbin's Store. Although they survived some time after rerouting the new 31E, these stores are an example of how altering transportation routes can doom older, established businesses.



Green River Grocery (Right)

At the same time that moving a transportation route kills businesses on the old route, it can create opportunity on the new road. The 1946 Green River Grocery is typical of the stores that sprung up along the improved route 31E, designed to accommodate automobile travel, and catering to tourists, selling local handicrafts and souvenirs as well as food. Unlike modern day interstate businesses, this store was land was and is locally owned.



Ham Sign (Right)



Pork production has been a successful enterprise in rural Hart County. Local stores have made a small tourist trade out of the famous country hams sold in this region. As this sign notes, hams, honey, bacon, and sorghum are available just a few feet ahead in Canmer.

Canmer

We pass through this small town, which grew up around a major wagon works business. Several small stores from the first half of the 20th century still exist along the road.



Gas Station in Hardyville (Right)

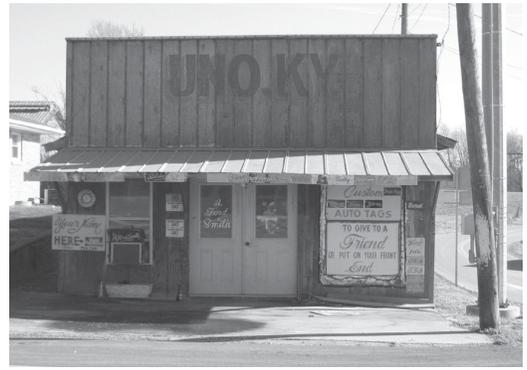


On your right, near the center of Hardyville, is an early example of a shed type station with a canopy. There is a later frame addition to the side of the structure.

Most early gas stations were small, prefabricated metal structures that could be easily assembled and moved. These tiny structures, known as sheds, housed an attendant and very few automobile-oriented accessories. Most automobile accessories had to be stored on the exterior of the structure because of its small size.

Uno

The mid-19th century name of this town is variously reported as either “Clear Pint” or Clear Point.” The former refers to the alleged availability of moonshine in the area, the latter is the cleaned up version. The name “Uno,” pronounced like “you know,” was selected when the town established a post office in the 1880s, as Clear Point was the name of another town. The origins of the name are not entirely clear. The most popular story is that when someone who was going to buy moonshine was asked where they were going, the standard reply was “oh, you know.” (Remnick 1984, 301).



There are a number of early 20th century commercial buildings in the town of Uno, many with false fronts. False fronts are essentially a “false” front wall that rises above the line of the roof to make the building look larger than one-story.



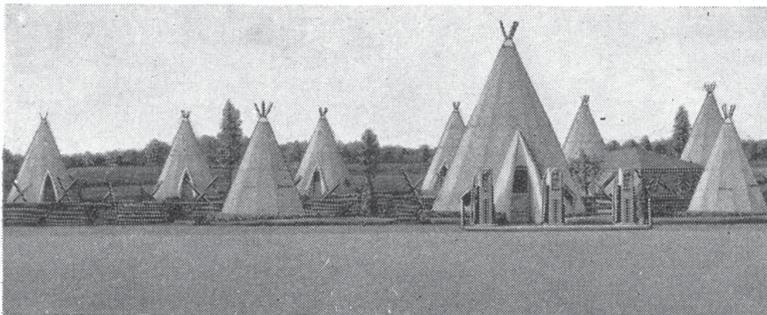
Wigwam Service Station (Left)

This vacant station is an oblong box station constructed in the 1950s to capitalize on the cave tourist trade. No doubt, the name closely associated it with the other important tourist attraction in the region: The Wigwam Villages.

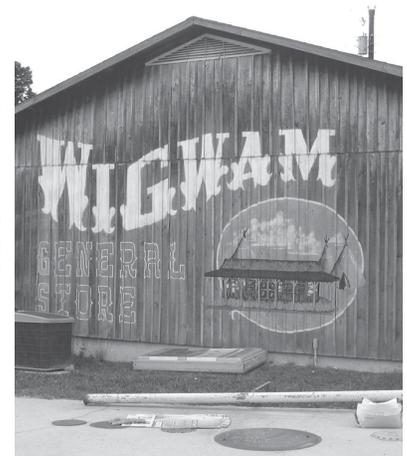
Wigwam Village No. 1 site, now Wigwam General Store (Right)

On the site of this general store at the intersection of 31E and Route 218 was the original Wigwam Village, established by Frank Redford. The motel was constructed at this intersection to capitalize on tourist trade coming to and from the Caves region. Wigwam Village No. 1 advertised private baths, heat, inner-spring mattresses, fans, large lawns, a café, a service station, and Western Union service. The motel was open 24 hours, unlike its hotel and stage coach inn predecessors. The Village was demolished in the 1970s.

Wigwam Village No. 1, from United Motor Courts Free Guide, 1941



Horse Cave, Ky.—WIGWAM VILLAGE NO. 1. On U. S. 31-E and 68, 3 Mi. E. of Horse Cave, 18 Mi. E. of Mammoth Cave. Private baths, heated, inner-spring mattresses, fans, large lawns, cafe, service station, always open. Western Union service. Phone 3722. AAA.
F. A. Redford, Owner-Manager.



Barren County

Brief history

“One of the largest counties in the state, Barren is located in south central Kentucky in the Mississippian Plateaus region. This section, known widely as the Pennyrile, is marked by a variety of landforms, from hilly uplands to rolling pastureland. Barren County’s 482 square miles are, in many ways, typical of Pennyrile topography. Plateau country carved by numerous streams in the southeast, plains dotted by sinkholes in the central and northeast, and a higher and noticeably more hilly section to the northwest are all represented among the county’s landscapes (Kentucky Historical Chronicle 1975: 3; McGrain and Currens 1978: 6).

Somewhat atypical is the nearly treeless plain found in the northern third of the county. It is thought that repeated burning of the land by native peoples in the distant past may have resulted in the prairie-like aspect of the countryside. Earliest settlers to the area at first avoided the relatively desolate land, dubbing it the “barrens.” Despite the lack of timber, and with streams hidden mostly underground, the “barrens” has proven among the most productive agricultural sections of the county. This rather unique area also became the namesake for the county of which it is a part as well as for a primary watercourse in this part of the state, the Barren River (Pearce 1978: 14; Simmons 1943: 13).” (Brent, Brent and Allen 2003, 113).

As with much of the area we will be driving through, Barren County was initially settled by Native Americans. Evidence of their presence can be found in rock shelters, cave sites, and ceremonial mounds. Euro-Americans explored the area in the 1760s and 70s, but permanent settlement did not come until the 1780s. Significant skirmishes with local American Indian tribes prevented large-scale migration. The animosities were formally ended in 1792, when the new settlers and the Native American tribes entered into a treaty. The new-found stability in the area attracted residents. In 1798, Barren officially became a county, named after its characteristic meadow-like barrens.

Barren County is known for its Scottish settlers, hence the county seat of Glasgow, as well as the caves region that surrounds it. The caves have spawned over 100 years of tourist activity in the area. Though not located within its border, Mammoth Cave is historically one of the most important tourist sites in the nation. The road to Mammoth Cave from Barren County is Route 90/70 west, which provides access to several other caves, including Onyx Cave and Diamond Caverns. Mammoth Cave is located 15 miles west of Cave City. Crystal Onyx Cave, another tourist site, is located directly to the south of Cave City. Most towns in the region, including Cave City and Park City (Park City is not on our tour), were developed to accommodate increasing tourism from the Louisville Nashville Turnpike, the railroad, and later the Dixie Highway.

Currently, growth in Barren County is stable, without significant in or out migration. The county lies outside the growth areas for Louisville and for Nashville. Given the depth of 20th century tourism related resources, Barren County could develop their economy based upon their historic tourism resources.

Barren County is one of few areas in the state where the dual routes of the western Dixie Highway converge. We will be traveling along 31E for approximately 8 miles until we get to Route 70, from which we will turn onto 31W, the western route of the west Dixie Highway. We will travel along 31W to Cave City and then onto Horse Cave in Hart County. It is four miles from the Junction of 31W and Route 70 to the Hart County line.

Resources

“See Rock City Atop Lookout Mtn, Chattanooga TN” Barn (Right)

These barn advertisements were started by Garnet Carter in the 1930s. For more information, see the description of See Rock City Barn in Spencer County Resources section of this tour guide.

Dutch Mill Restaurant (nee Café) (Left)

This café has been drastically altered in the last 5 years, though it still retains its original function. Windmills were popular fanciful roadside icons in the 1920s and 1930s. In Barren County, not only was there a Dutch Mill Café, but there was also a Dutch Mill Village located south of Glasgow. The Village included “windmill” tourist cabins, a restaurant, a service station, souvenir stand, a club room, grocery, ice cream stand, and etc. The business operated until 1976, and was town down shortly thereafter.



(Turn left onto Route 70)



Pennyrile Barn (Left)

The Pennyrile barn is a characteristic barn type for this region of western Kentucky. The barn type was developed after the turn of the 20th century to house an increasing number of beef cattle. The new design featured hay racks appended to the outside walls for more convenient feeding of cattle. The barns also increased the stock capacity of the barn by decreasing storage space for feed. (Raitz 1978, 22-23).

Caves and Wigwam Iconography

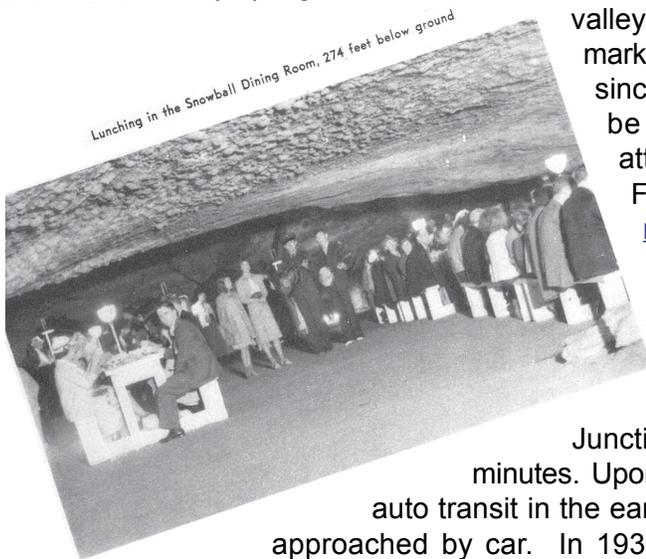
“Scores of signs, arrows, and billboards southwest of Cave City insist that it is only so many miles to this or that cave. This is cave country, and dozens of cave-owners, in spite of the near-by Mammoth Cave, do a good business. Roadside stands sell large and small rock formations from the caves.” (WPA Writer’s Project 1939, 302).

A contemporary writer would probably have much the same things to say about current day Cave City, as WPA writers of 65 years ago. No doubt, new motels have been established more suitable for the mid-century motor age and new signs were hung in the latest fashion, but all the essential flashy elements are still there, albeit in a more depressed form. Competing signs, billboards, and cave advertisements still demand the viewer’s attention. In Cave City, we again see how natural or historic themes are utilized by local merchants. Commercial references to the area’s cave legacy are plenty. Interestingly, the area’s most important flight of fancy, the Wigwam Villages Nos. 1 and 2, have even spawned their own theme, as we see in the Wigwam General Store, the Wigwam Service Station, Wigwam Stock Yards, and the Wigwam Baptist Church. Wigwam themes were fashionable in the early 1930s, due to the popularity of “wild west” characters in movies and comic books.

Mammoth Cave National Park

Cave City is the gateway to Mammoth Cave National Park, lying only 15 miles to the east. The Park is among Kentucky’s main tourist attractions. Mammoth Cave National Park was officially

Photo: *In Kentucky Spring 1938, 19*



established in 1941 to preserve the cave system, including Mammoth Cave and the scenic river valleys of the Green and Nolin rivers. Actively marketed and promoted as a wonder of the world since the early 19th century, it is considered to be the second oldest “marketable tourist attraction” in the United States after Niagara Falls. (<http://www.point-travel.com/mammoth-cave-city/index.htm?s=gt>).

Originally, the cave was accessed by stage coach, then with the advent of the Mammoth Cave Railroad in 1886, visitors could board a train at Glasgow Junction (Park City) and be at the Cave in 25 minutes. Upon the construction of better roads and cheap auto transit in the early 20th century, the cave was increasingly approached by car. In 1931 with the popularity of auto transit, the Mammoth Cave Railroad discontinued operation of the formerly lucrative line.

The 1938 *In Kentucky* magazine notes that, “Mammoth Cave, Kentucky’s greatest tourist attraction, is preparing this year for a record number of sight-seers, vacationists, and tourists—and has more to offer tourists than ever before... Good roads from every direction now lead to Mammoth Cave, accessible now the year round to the millions of curious summer travelers who are coming to see for themselves what they have heard so much about all their lives. And they will be well repaid, for here, in south-central Kentucky, is truly one of nature’s grandest most inspiring wonders.” (*In Kentucky Spring 1938, 19*).

We will not pass by the Mammoth Cave site on this trip.

Enter 31W at Cave City

Taking a course through west central Kentucky, US 31W runs near the river for a time, approaches it, and then goes up the Salt River Valley. It enters the Knobs region where the countryside lumps up into small round hills streaked with ravines. Near the south-central part of the State the route makes a great elbow curve through the cavernous limestone region containing Mammoth Cave...The route follows the general course of the Old Louisville and Nashville stagecoach route. Prior to the completion (1859) of the Louisville & Nashville R.R., travel over this road was greater than over any other road in Kentucky. (Works Projects Administration Federal Writer's Project 1939, 296).

Motels

In order to lodge the numerous visitors that came to see the Caves region, accommodations began to spring up in the early 1900s. Unlike the earlier taverns and inns that lined the old Louisville and Nashville stagecoach route in the early 1800s, the new motels were oriented to the new mode of travel: the automobile. Typically situated behind a sea of parking and designed to take up the most horizontal space, thus becoming another example of building as sign, the new motels had the car



31W motel strip, late 1970s (Kentucky Heritage Council)

traveler in mind. Visibility along the road was essential for attracting business. Motel owners tried to capture the attention of passing motorists by using a number of techniques. They sought to maximize their road frontage by emphasizing the physical layout of the building. Configurations such as U-shaped, L-shaped, and row plans were all ways of taking up space along the roadside. Because motels were on the outskirts of towns, the land prices were cheap; owners could afford to locate their buildings parallel with the highway. They also used large, brightly colored neon signs to increase recognition. The "Vacancy" sign was often the best way to communicate to the passing motorist the availability of rooms.

As was the case with other forms of roadside architecture, motels took on imagery associated with domesticity, fanciful characters, streamlined modernism, and/or regional themes. Cave City motels appear to have taken in domestic imagery, with the exception of Wigwam Village. Several of the more notable motels, with their characteristic neon signs, utilize a mix of imagery from ranch houses to the colonial revival style. The use of domestic imagery was an attempt to make the traveler feel at home in a strange place. It also associated the motel with the cleanliness and comfort of home. It is no surprise that the family-oriented cave region made great use of this imagery for their lodging accommodations.

The scale of caves area tourism and the need to accommodate tourism was immense, especially in mid-20th century. Because of the substantial expansion in automobile tourism in the caves region in the 1950s, many of the motels you see there today are of this vintage. Interestingly, motel owners initially built modest sized motels, but when demand became clear, they added more rooms onto their buildings. Motel owners financed these major improvements incrementally through increased revenues. As a result, most of the motels we see on this strip have been added onto numerous times. The additions conform to the guiding

principles of standard motel building, in that they take up substantial room along the commercial strip, were constructed of brick or Bedford stone veneer, and were located where land was inexpensive. But, they did not conform to a standard shape; rather the motels' configurations conform to the size of the lot and the most fiscally responsible manner of addition.

Holiday Motel (Right)

The Holiday is a one-story brick veneered ranch style motel that probably dates to the late 1950s. This motel's roof overhangs the eaves and is supported by decorative wrought iron supports. This overhang provides covered shelter for guests attempting to access their rooms. Each room has a screen door, a concrete bench, and shuttered windows, further associating the motel with the comforts of home. Inside the rooms, free TV, wall to wall carpeting, and registration with AAA is offered to confirm expectations of a family-oriented establishment.



Inside the rooms, free TV, wall to wall carpeting, and registration with AAA is offered to confirm expectations of a family-oriented establishment.

The Holiday Motel is arranged in a modified L-shaped design which gave the motorists ample time to see it and make the decision to stop. The exuberant 1950s boomerang neon sign is particularly appealing as it invites tourists to turn into the parking lot from the Dixie Highway with its brightly colored yellow neon arrow. These visual cues were important to motel owners for luring prospective guests, because motorists typically made the decision to stay spontaneously. Making advance reservations had not yet become the norm.

Cave City Budget Inn (Left)

The Cave City Budget Inn, formerly the Cave City Motel, is another example of a 1950s domestically influenced motel. This time, the ranch house includes large wooden gables, set at regular intervals around the motel's front façade. The sign employs much of the modernity of the Holiday sign in its bombastic proportions, yet it has been drastically altered sometime in the last 20 years. This motel has a swimming pool easily viewable from the road and perhaps



forming yet another advertisement for the establishment. The pool also establishes the motel as a destination for weary tourists and not just an overnight stop. The motel is a modified u-shape with several additions. Its shape nearly approximates a gentle arc. It is possible that this shape was meant to mimic the nearby Wigwam Villages.

Hunt Storage Units (Right)

Formerly a Bedford stone veneered motel, the structure now serves as rental storage units. The reuse of aging motels to serve as storage units is fairly common in Kentucky.

Scottish Inn (Right)

Originally the Jolly Motel, the Scottish Inn is a modified u-shaped ranch-influenced 1950s motel. This one-story brick-veneered strip motel is set back even more than its neighbors and appears much more horizontal as a consequence. A large swimming pool is located directly in front of the main motel façade. Jolly's Restaurant, now a funeral home (a restful night's sleep), was located in the Bedford stone building directly in front of the motel. The motel was originally locally owned, but at some point became part of the Scottish Inn motel chain.



The Scottish Inn chain was started in Kingston Tennessee in the late 1960s. It was one of the first motel chains to use factory built modular construction to decrease construction costs. In this case, a Scottish Inn franchisee purchased the motel and operated it under this brand name. (Jakle, Sculle, and Rogers 1996, 199).

Cave Land Motel (Left)

Cave City motel owners began a major building campaign in the 1950s to respond to a growing number of automobile tourists. This motel, like many others, was constructed in that era. The site originally contained tourist cabins with attached garages. At some point in the 1950s, the cabins were connected and the garages were converted to guest rooms. The motel



currently is a small brick-veneered ranch motel with a central office under a colonial revival pediment, though the original cabins exist within this unified block. As with the Cave City Budget Inn, this motel is shaped like a gentle arc.

The sign has been greatly altered. Though the original neon exists on a portion of the sign, much of it has been removed to insert painted American flags and the phrase, "American owned and operated." This imagery is a new theme in the region, where a large number of local motels are now operated by those of foreign descent or people of diverse ethnicity. The original lower panel

that now contains American flags initially contained the Vacancy sign and other neon that advertised TVs in Rooms, Tubs, Showers, Air Conditioning and AAA-approved.

Cave Land was built by Lottie Combs, her husband, son Clyde Combs, and son-in-law Maynard Donselman. The family had moved here from east Kentucky. The elder Combs lived in an apartment behind the office, like many of the other owner/operators. Local kids tried to make friends with their children so they could swim in the pool. The Combs operated it until the late 1980s.

Deco Gas Station (Left)

This streamlined moderne gas station was originally intended to imply modernity, in spite of the state we see it in today. In the late 1930s and 1940s, station owners began to construct new, modern gasoline stations with service bays integrated into the design of the building.



The idea was to design a structure that implied speed, modernity, and progress, in a time of great economic and social uncertainty. These new stations were rectangular in shape and contained at least two-to-three bays for automotive repairs.

The station is a rare surviving example of this style, a design vocabulary that was often eschewed in 1970s Kentucky for a more traditional colonial revival look. This station was probably constructed in the late 1930s or early 1940s of porcelain enamel over a steel structural system. The

original glass display windows have been enclosed by vertical wood siding.

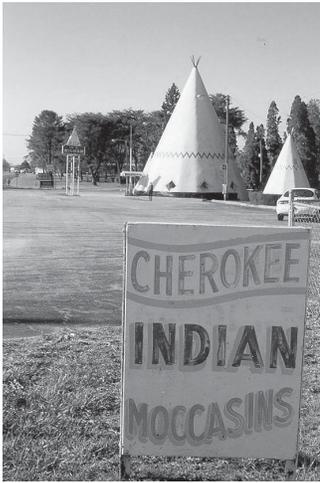
Wigwam Village No. 2 (Left) (Tour Stop)

“A dozen or more Wigwams ... arranged in an oval, offer a novel variation from the usual tourist cabins.” (Works Projects Administration Federal Writer’s Project 1939, 303).



Frank Redford, a Horse Cave resident, developed the first Wigwam Village on Route 31E (now demolished) in 1933-36, inspired by a tepee-shaped lunch stand he had seen in California. He expanded his business with Wigwam Village No. 2 in 1937, which includes 18 poured concrete “wigwams” (which actually mimic teepees), to capitalize on tourist trade in the caves region. The No. 2 Village consists of a motel office wigwam that formerly housed a restaurant and gift shop, gas pumps outside the main wigwam, “brave’s” and

“squaw’s” restroom facilities inside two smaller teepees, and a grassy common space around which 15 teepee motel rooms are ordered. Literally “sleeping in a wigwam,” albeit a concrete teepee, the guest was treated to rustic wooden furniture and bathing facilities within each motel room. The wigwams would have been considered the height of modernity upon their completion.

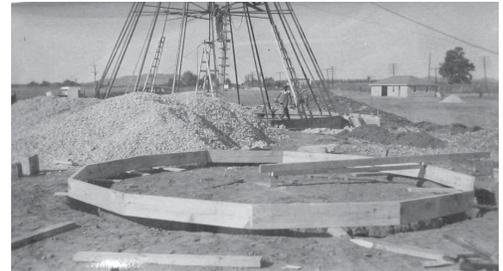


Signage for the wigwams was accomplished through neon signs exhorting travelers to “sleep in a wigwam,” or hand-painted signs advertising “Cherokee Indian Moccasins” for sale. As is the case with the Drive-In Theater, the Wigwams became a sign in and of themselves. The giant wigwams captured traveler’s attention through their sheer size as well as their extraordinary appearance.

The Wigwams are often referred to in architectural history parlance, as “Ducks.” Buildings that are meant to mimic things, such as objects or animals, are called “Ducks,” and are among the most popular roadside attractions. The term “duck” came about in reference to one building, The Big Duck in Riverhead, Long Island, but the term now refers to all buildings which are disguised as other sorts of objects. Famous examples include Lucy the Margate Elephant in Atlantic City, and the Brown Derby restaurant in

Hollywood. In many cases, the object mimed by the building refers to the business it contains: well-known examples include milk bottles, ice cream cones, hot dogs, and teapots. Other examples make punning references to their business: a dog for a hot dog stand. Many examples, however, simply borrow images from the popular culture to attract the attention of the automobile driver, such as the now lost Windmill Village motel in Glasgow, a cottage court consisting of a set of individual windmills for motel rooms.

Wigwam Village is one of the great icons of roadside architecture in America; one of a handful of survivors of representational architecture like the Big Duck on Long Island, Lucy the Margate Elephant in Atlantic City, the Teapot Dome Service station in Zillah, Washington, and the Tail O’ the Pup in Hollywood that would be featured in any serious book on the subject.



Wigwam Village # 2 under construction. Photo courtesy Ivan Johns, Wigwam Village.

As for the Wigwam Village concept, Frank Redford licensed it to other developers, and opened another village himself in California in 1947. Others were built in Florida, New Orleans, Arizona, and Birmingham. The Arizona and California Villages are the only other Wigwam Villages still standing. Wigwam Village No. 2 remains in business today.

Travel Inn (Right)

This motel was formerly called the Twin City Motel, before it was purchased by the Travel Inn chain. It was built in the 1958 by the Fisher family, who were local residents. The house located to the side was originally a restaurant.

The motel is a more traditional double bar (two strips) shape with one strip of rooms located behind another strip of rooms. The motel also has several 1930s-40s tourist cabins situated to the rear of the first bar. The style of the motel is neo-colonial. Note the cupolas and weather vanes on the motel roof.



Horse Cave (Hart County) Tour Stop

Horse Cave is the only Kentucky city to have its Main Street situated directly above a cave entrance. According to various sources, the town was named for Cherokee Indians who used nearby caves to corral their horses. Another legend has it that the town was named after a horse that inadvertently fell into a cave. Whatever the case, the town was officially established as Horse Cave in the early 1850s by Major Albert Anderson, an early resident and tobacco shipper.

The Louisville and Nashville Railroad was constructed through the town in 1859, making it a hub for the surrounding countryside. The impressive downtown, described by the WPA Writer's Project as, "scattered away from the road and from a curious L-shaped business section...", was developed largely as a result of railroad transportation. (WPA Writer's Project 1939, 302). The buildings are located close together and clustered close to the rail line for easy access. The town also became a stop for tourists traveling to visit Hidden River Cave, Mammoth cave, and other caves in the immediate vicinity. The Owen's Hotel was constructed very close to the rail line to accommodate train travelers. Upon the coming of the automobile, Horse Cave benefited from its position on 31W, the official Dixie Highway and former Lower Louisville Nashville Turnpike. The cave solicitation stand, now the Bee-Lov-Lee Salon, reflects this important period in automobile tourism.

At one point, Horse Cave was the largest city in the county, surpassing the county seat of Munfordville. "Today, Horse Cave is one of the world's largest burley tobacco markets, a fact attested to by the large warehouses on the southern edge of the city." (Brent and Brent 2001, 279). Tourism forms the second largest industry in the town, as it did historically.

We will be stopping in Horse Cave for an hour to tour various railroad and auto-oriented tourist industries.

Resources

Horse Cave Motel (Right)

The Horse Cave Motel is a Bedford stone-veneered structure with a central two-story block. The two-story portion of the building has two sets of distinctive poured concrete curvilinear stairs leading to the second floor. These types of flashy design elements are typical to mid-century modern architecture. The motel we see today has at least two building periods. The central portion appears to have been constructed first with the one-story wings added at a later date.



This motel was built by the Smith family in the 1950s to cater to cave area tourists. The family originally owned the Speedway Cabins across the Dixie Highway.



Bee-Lov-Lee Salon

At first glance, this stone building appears to be a house-type gas station. Actually, this structure served as the ticket office for three area caves: Hidden River Cave, Crystal Cave, and Mammoth Onyx Cave. Following improvements to 31W in the Horse Cave area in the early 1930s, Dr. Thomas, the caves' owner, constructed this building along the new section of road to sell tickets and souvenirs for all three sites. (Chaney

2004). Although there were ticket offices at the cave sites, the more visible location on the highway was needed to pull in the automobile tourist. In more recent times, the building has served as a hair salon.

Owens Hotel

Horse Cave's importance as a cave tourism stop, made possible by the coming of the railroad in the 1850s, grew considerably after the end of the Civil War. Railroad Hotels were an important part of the local economy. The Owens Hotel, the brick building on the opposite side of the tracks from the main part of town, now in poor condition, was constructed in 1908 by Clarence Owens, a local developer. Owens added an annex in 1925, and the original building was destroyed by fire in 1930. A new building replaced the original hotel soon after to satisfy local demand for accommodations. The city of Horse Cave is currently looking into rehab options for the important property.



Kentucky Repertory Theatre at Horse Cave, formerly the Thomas Opera House (Tour Stop)

Horse Cave Theatre, as it was first called, was incorporated in 1975 by William T. Austin and Tom Chaney. They recruited the actor Warren Hammack as Artistic Director, and the theatre opened in 1977 with George Bernard Shaw's *Candida*. It is the only professional repertory theater in Kentucky, and one of the few remaining in the country. Kentucky Repertory Theatre at Horse Cave features a professional acting company assembled through a nationwide search, and a six play repertory season in performance from June through October, allowing visitors to see three different plays in two days in a fully air conditioned, wheelchair accessible theatre. The theatre is a major tourism attraction in the region, building upon the tradition of the Thomas Opera House that once occupied the same location.

The location of the Kentucky Repertory Theatre at Horse Cave has a long history of public entertainments, originally fed by the railroad tourists who would come to stay at the Owens Hotel and see the caves, but needed other diversions. Touring theatre companies, musicians, lecturers and others performed in the opera house, which occupied the second story of an earlier building on the site, which burned in 1909. In 1911, the two-story brick building was reconstructed and theatrical productions resumed. The old Thomas Opera House stage is still located on the second floor of the repertory theatre, above the auditorium, in a remarkable state of preservation, though the majority of the building was altered in the 1970s and 80s to accommodate the repertory theater's needs. Electricity generated from the running water in



the cave below powered the theater's lights, and in the early 1920s, silent films were shown on the original stage.

Thomas House (Tour Stop)

George Thomas purchased the circa 1859 house and the Cave in 1887, and extensively remodeled it in the Second Empire style with the tower and the mansard roof. He found ways to profit from the cave below, first by damming the river within as a source of water, and then later to generate electricity. Horse Cave was thus

one of the earliest towns in the state to have electrical service, although it is reported that Thomas turned off the power at his own whim at night, plunging the town into darkness. One can still see pieces of the electrical generating equipment inside the cave. (Chaney 2004)

George Thomas's son, Harry B. Thomas remodeled the house further in 1908, and ran his dentistry business in the corner tower room. Harry Thomas is an important figure in local tourism in the town, as he formally opened the Hidden River Cave to tours. In the 1920s, he contracted with spelunker Floyd Collins, better known for later being fatally trapped in a cave, to build steps down to the cave and trails within to facilitate visits by tourists. (Chaney 2004). Later changes to the house include the addition of arts and crafts style porch elements and the 1950s kitchen. The City of Horse Cave purchased the house in 1999 and is currently in the process of restoring it for offices and community use with grant moneys from the Kentucky Heritage Council and the Dart Foundation, the charitable arm of local manufacturer, Dart Industries.

Ticket Office (Tour Stop)

Next door to the Thomas house is a small ticket office for collecting entry tickets from cave visitors, above the old set of stairs leading to the cave entrance. Entry could be made into the cave from this point.

Hidden River Cave and American Cave Museum (Tour Stop)

The Hidden River Cave lies underneath the town of Horse Cave, under Main Street. Historically, the cave has been a tourist attraction for some time. "In 1916 the stone steps were extended to the entrance of the cave, a contest named it Hidden River Cave, and it was opened to the public. It was shown for more than 25 years until it was closed in the early 1940s by pollution. The river in the cave drains the entire town plus a vast area to the south and east, emptying in



several springs along Green River. In 1993, with sewage removed from the cave by the construction of a regional sewer system, the tourist attraction was reopened with the American Cave Museum as a joint venture between the city and the American Cave Conservation Association which has its headquarters here.” (A Leaf in Time, VI, p7).

The American Cave Museum is a self-guided museum with two floors of exhibits dealing with caves, groundwater and pollution. Guided tours descend 150 feet underground.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The tragic loss of thousands of early and architecturally grand structures that were swept aside in the 1950s and 1960s by highway construction, development, and urban renewal played a large part in the birth of the historic preservation movement. When we turn our gaze from the early architecture so revered by that movement to the often-ephemeral resources of the automobile age and the recent past, it might seem almost perverse to some. Why would we want to save the very buildings and places whose construction may have been the impetus for the demise of structures and landscapes earlier preservationists fought to save? And isn't there a danger that preservationists will spread themselves too thin, expending energy on attempts to preserve resources of the recent past that could go toward saving earlier resources? Finally, even if we agree that preservation of roadside resources is important, how do we bring that about?

Why Preserve?

To begin with, the reasons that we would hope to preserve the recent past are the same reasons we preserve historic places in general. It begins with an acknowledgement that the recent past is our history as much as the past that has been around longer, and that the preservation of resources from all time periods fosters a sense of continuity in our society. These spaces can continue to support smaller locally owned businesses; ones that contribute to local character and a sense of place. So, they can help to combat corporate sameness. Preservation also makes sense from an environmental point of view, saving materials from the past rather than tossing them aside into landfills in favor of new materials that must be produced from the diminishing mines, wells, and forests, and by promoting the redevelopment of previously developed land over the clearing of new land. And preservation makes sense from an economic point of view, through the promotion of skilled jobs, tourism, the return of unproductive vacant buildings to the tax rolls, and the incentives provided by historic preservation tax credits.

Resources of the recent past present us with some thorny preservation problems. A 40-year old cinema closes and is put up for sale with a no competition clause forbidding subsequent owners to use the building as a cinema. Road improvements threaten to bypass or even destroy a popular roadside grocery. An old gas station has a leaking underground storage tank. The logs in a 1930s roadside tourism stop are rotting and the building is difficult to remodel for ADA accessibility. A vacant Arby's restaurant awaits demolition, remodeling, or reuse. Construction materials used in the 1960s are deteriorating and similar materials are no longer available.

Document First

Finding solutions to these problems is not easy. A number of approaches to the problem must be pursued, but where we begin is where we always begin: with documentation of the resources; that is, photographing, researching, and perhaps drawing plans or elevations of the studied object(s). Given the constantly changing nature of so much of the roadside - a fast food restaurant that lasts over 25 years in a relatively unaltered state is exceptional - documentation is the only way some of these resources will be understood and appreciated. Documentation will also help us to better understand roadside resources and the issues that arise in attempts to preserve them. It also helps us to place them in context, and to determine which are eligible for the National Register.

Listing these resources on the National Register is also an important part of the documentation process. The National Register of Historic Places is the official Federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. The National Register challenges us to define how our built environment contributes to an understanding of the historic and cultural foundations of our communities, our state, and our nation. Because the Register helps us understand the ways in which historic properties are important, it allows us to make informed decisions regarding their continued use. National Register listing is an important step in gaining legitimacy and significance for roadside resources.

Educate the Public

Education, of course, goes hand in hand with documentation. Resources that local people take for granted may well be extremely important to understanding and interpreting our past. What may seem like just another old motel to some people may be important in the context of cave area tourism in the region. There are also resources that many people would never even consider roadside resources, but they can be seen as significant through this lens. Examples of these sites are resources like "My Old Kentucky Home" a.k.a. Federal Hill, the Thomas House in Horse Cave, or Abraham Lincoln's Birthplace Site. All of these resources are associated with early automobile tourism, and are important in that context. But, typically they are not evaluated in this framework and instead are given what, to some, is a more legitimate meaning, as if roadside history is not as important. Using a more broadly defined period of significance for tourism sites is essential for giving roadside architecture the legitimacy it deserves.

Undertaking educational projects, like this one, helps spur efforts to appreciate these resources and should be an essential second step in a project to build appreciation of roadside history. Regrettably, national scholars of roadside architecture do not always take the subject matter very seriously, refusing to place the resources into a context through which they might be appreciated. Instead, these "fun" resources become part of a collection of "cool" photographs, divorced from meaning. When this happens, it is impossible to formulate good reasons to preserve the resources as anything but "cool" photos. No one will be convinced to preserve a place because an architectural historian thinks it is cool. Educational efforts should always focus on the meaning derived from these resources and attempt to explain to the viewer why these places merit understanding and preservation. Written studies, like this one, or exhibits can help raise awareness of the resource's importance. So, along with documentation, education is important.

What are the options?

Just what can these twin efforts bring to local areas? For one, these types of corridor studies can not only help document the resources and build an awareness of their importance, but they may also serve as the basis for increased tourism, as they did historically. Heritage tourism is a growing field in the tourism sector. In fact, a survey commissioned by the Travel Industry of America suggests that 65 percent of all America travelers included a cultural or historic activity or event on their trip. The number one type of destination among cultural and heritage travelers is visiting a historic site (43 percent). According to the survey, 29.6 million travelers added extra time to their trip. In general, tourists with heritage or cultural interests have more disposable income than the average population, stay longer at their destination, and are more respectful of local resources. Additionally, heritage tourism allows local communities to build upon the resources they have and rely upon themselves, to a large extent, for economic development. A factory may move in and out in a period of a few years, looking for a cheaper work force, but historic resources belong to the community and can be used to benefit all. Also, tourism is a relatively low-impact industry on the environment.

Looking at those roadside resources that have endured, places such as Wigwam Village, can also inspire better future development efforts. Documentation has already shown us that the Horse Cave/Cave City corridor of Route 31W is a remarkable area, one with incredible potential. Here you have two historic railroad era towns of the traditional main street type, connected by a short corridor with a fascinating roadside history. Imagine a plan for the area that considers the two towns and the corridor as a whole. A redevelopment plan would encourage the preservation and restoration of historic resources along the corridor and in the two towns to build upon the tourism history of the area. It would be anchored by the traditional downtown redevelopment/Main Street/Renaissance efforts that we all know so well for both towns, but couple this with a plan that encourages development of traditional roadside-type resources along the corridor joining the two towns. Imagine the art deco gas station as a working filling station or a restaurant. If a new motel goes in, actively encourage them to consider a cottage court style structure with an elaborate neon sign. All of these resources, as long as they are income-producing, would be eligible for historic preservation tax credits. Seek Transportation Enhancement funds to construct a pedestrian/bike path along the corridor linking the two towns. Visitors to the area could stay at motels like Wigwam Village, go to antique shops and restaurants in both towns, take in theatrical productions in Horse Cave, and stop at diners, ice cream parlors, a bowling alley, or a miniature golf courses along the 31 W corridor. In sum, the area could be a showcase that spans over 150 years of transportation history, highlighting resources related to trains, cars, and bikes.

Roadside Architecture at a Crossroads

Preservation of our fragile roadside heritage is at a crossroads today in Kentucky and across the nation. Sprawl type development and a lack of appreciation for this legacy has led to demolition of many of the resources. Additionally, when the buildings survive, alterations to their historic fabric make them nearly unrecognizable as important roadside resources. It will be essential in years to come that efforts be taken to preserve the resources, as the basis of good economic development and as reminders of our rich past. It is hoped that this tour will spur research, documentation, education, and preservation of American roadside heritage.

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